

African-
American
apathy

PAGE 7

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LIVING WITH AIDS



Shannon, United Feature Syndicate

Is survival possible?

Daniel J. DeNoon reports

The poor and AIDS

Too little help, too late

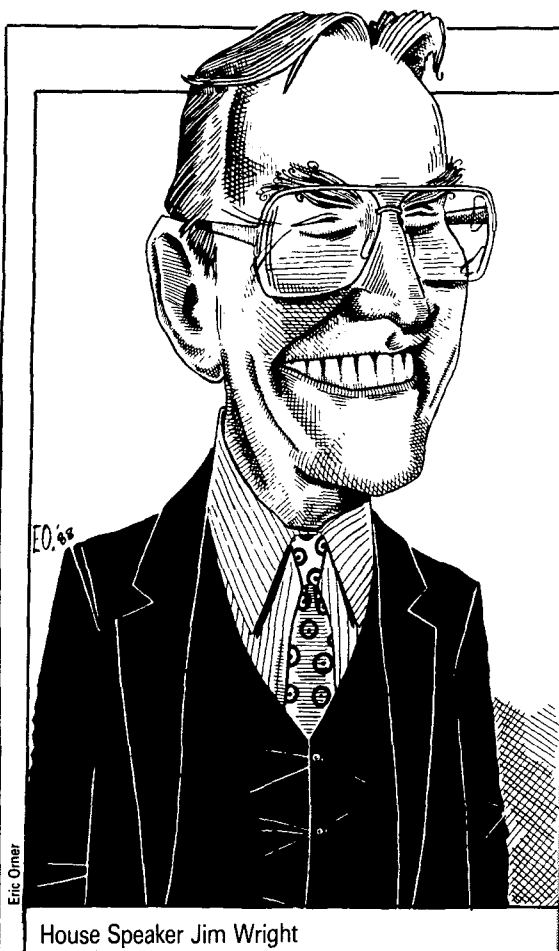
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Locked out

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House Speaker Jim Wright

Wright's wrongs and real issues

By John B. Judis

WASHINGTON, D.C.

For the next month, and perhaps longer, politics in this town will be dominated by the Jim Wright affair. The air will be filled with pronouncements about good and evil—and predictions about whether the speaker of the House will survive. Some politicians and journalists see the investigation into Wright's finances as a salutary process of reform; others view it as an unpleasant but necessary exercise.

I find myself torn between the suspicion that Wright is guilty and deserves what he is getting and the feeling that the immense attention given the case is symptomatic of a political sickness that is diverting the country and Congress from far more serious problems. In wavering between these two competing perspectives, I had the following conversation with myself.

Isn't Jim Wright being charged with serious offenses?
The investigation is serious primarily because Wright is

an extraordinarily powerful politician and second in succession to the presidency after Vice President Dan Quayle. But the offenses are not.

Wright is not being accused of subverting political freedom—the basic issue in Watergate—or usurping democratic decisionmaking—the issue in Iran-contra—but of small-time greed and corruption. He is accused of making \$54,600 in disguised honoraria from the sales of his book, *Reflections of a Public Man*, and of not reporting \$145,000 in gifts from George Mallick, a Fort Worth developer.

The House will probably throw out the Mallick charges because of the difficulty of proving that Mallick had a "direct interest in legislation" before Congress. The House rule, which bars gifts of more than \$100 from people with a direct interest, was written with lobbyists for corporations and unions in mind and was not intended to apply to old cronies like Mallick with complicated business and political ties. This means the case will come down to Wright's silly book.

But isn't it important if the speaker of the U.S. House accepted gifts from someone who stood to benefit from his decisions?

It is not of earthshaking significance. The same thing goes on legally in Congress on a much larger scale. For instance, Rep. Frederick Boucher (D-VA) gets the bulk of his campaign contributions from Wall Street securities firms and junk bond dealers who have no direct interest in his district but who stand to benefit from Boucher's dogged advocacy of their interests. Rep. Stan Parris (R-VA) recently switched his position on the savings and loan crisis, opposing new administration regulations as too stringent, under pressure from a major Virginia campaign contributor. Punishing Wright won't change these systematic and persistent practices.

Isn't the investigation into Wright part of a long-term process of ending political corruption? Don't you have to start somewhere?

The investigation of Wright trivializes the real issue, which is not ethical, but political, and which goes back to the Progressive Era. Each year the federal government plays a more active role in the nation's economic life. Corporations understand this. They move their headquarters to Washington, they establish political action committees and they hire teams of lawyers and lobbyists to represent them. But the public and the politicians refuse to recognize that government has to come to terms with its growing economic role.

Instead, government operates in much the same laissez-faire way that it did in the late 19th century. Each politician represents certain interests; the final decision on any issue incorporates all these competing interests. Thus Wright, representing two of his Texas contributors, could prolong and worsen the savings and loan crisis. Of course, Congress decided not to charge him for this, reasoning correctly that what he did was well within the bounds of normal congressional behavior.

But aren't there specific reforms that would lessen corruption?

I'm not sure if there are. Some change in campaign financing would probably help, but there is a problem here. If you totally eliminate any private financing, then ultimately the government will be deciding who can run for office. Will it choose to fund protest candidates and outsiders challenging the establishment?

In the short term, probably the best solution for the current corruption would be the resurgence of popular movements that could provide some financial counterweight to the savings and loan lobby or to corporate lobbies like the Business Roundtable.

So why is Congress making such a fuss about Wright?

Of course, Wright is not blameless. If he hadn't gotten greedy, he wouldn't be in trouble. But Wright was also done in by an energetic Republican opposition that began to plot his downfall in the fall of 1987. Conservative Republicans were angered by Wright's private dealings with the Sandinistas and Costa Rican President Oscar Arias. Wright probably did more than any single person to undermine the administration's contra strategy in Nicaragua, and there were many people in Congress and the White House who wanted to get back at him.

Wright also fell afoul of House Republicans, including moderates like Minority Leader Robert Michel (R-IL),

because of his high-handed parliamentary tactics. House Republicans, who had dealt amicably with former speakers, felt that they could not work with Wright, and they wanted to get rid of him.

Rep. Newt Gingrich (R-GA) and some of the younger Republicans went on a crusade against Wright. In December 1987 Gingrich charged that Wright had used campaign funds to finance his book's publication. Ironically, counsel Richard Phelan and the ethics committee failed to confirm this charge. But by throwing Wright's behavior into question, Gingrich set off the chain of events that resulted in the appointment of a special counsel in June 1988.

Didn't Gingrich get an assist from the public-interest lobby Common Cause?

He did. In May 1988 Common Cause called for an investigation of Wright, but Common Cause regularly calls for investigations of somebody or something. But in addition to Common Cause, Gingrich also needed the press and the public's obsession with sleaze and corruption. Several major newspapers put teams of reporters on Wright, and it was investigative stories in the *Washington Post* and *New York Times* that really forced the ethics committee to call an investigation.

The newspapers were doing their job, but they were also being driven by two other factors. First, since Watergate they have tried to compete with television for public attention by exposing the sins and foibles of high public figures, from Gary Hart to Jim Wright. Second, the press finds very little else that it can cover. Most politicians and journalists recognize that American industry is in steep decline and our cities are in ruins, but they don't know what to do about it. They feel trapped by budget deficits and opinion polls. They also recognize that the Cold War is over, but they are unwilling to think about what comes next.

Gingrich, who last month replaced former Rep. Dick

INSIDE STORY

Cheney (R-WY) as the Republican whip, epitomizes this exhaustion of Washington political debate. Eight years ago Gingrich was one of the few House members thinking about the effects of automation and satellite technology on American industry. He understood that in the future, government would have to play a more active role in American industry. His 1984 book, *Window of Opportunity*, was actually one of the more interesting books published by a politician—leagues ahead of *Reflections of a Public Man*. But now Gingrich talks of nothing except corruption and public ethics.

He tries to give corruption some higher political meaning. The corruption he is fighting, Gingrich wrote in a recent "manifesto," "has become endemic to the liberal welfare state." But this is just partisan nonsense: the conservative Reagan administration was the most corrupt in at least 60 years.

So what is the significance of the Wright investigation?

Since the early '70s, when the U.S. abandoned both the Vietnam War and Bretton Woods, American politics has been plagued by scandal and side issues, from Watergate to Billygate to the Meese investigation and the Iran-contra scandal. If you look at the last two years, the record is even more depressing.

The 1988 presidential campaign began with Hart's sex scandal and Sen. Joe Biden's plagiarism. In the general election there was Quayle's National Guard duty, Dukakis' mental health, Bush's mistress, and such irrelevant issues as the Pledge of Allegiance and state furlough policies. And now this year there is Congress fighting it out over a pay raise, John Tower's drinking and Jim Wright's greed, while the administration tackles the trade deficit by banning imports of attack rifles.

Most of these issues have had some merit in themselves. But taken together they amount to a sordid record of political diversion. □

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By Paul Rauber

WATSONVILLE, CALIF.

FOR LATINOS HERE, AS IN MANY OTHER PARTS of California, democracy has always been a largely theoretical matter, something you have to study about if you want to become a U.S. citizen. And there really hasn't been much inducement to seek citizenship here: even though Latinos make up more than half the population, not one Latino was elected to the city council until 1987, and Tony Campos got on then only because there were just two Anglo candidates for the three seats vacant that year.

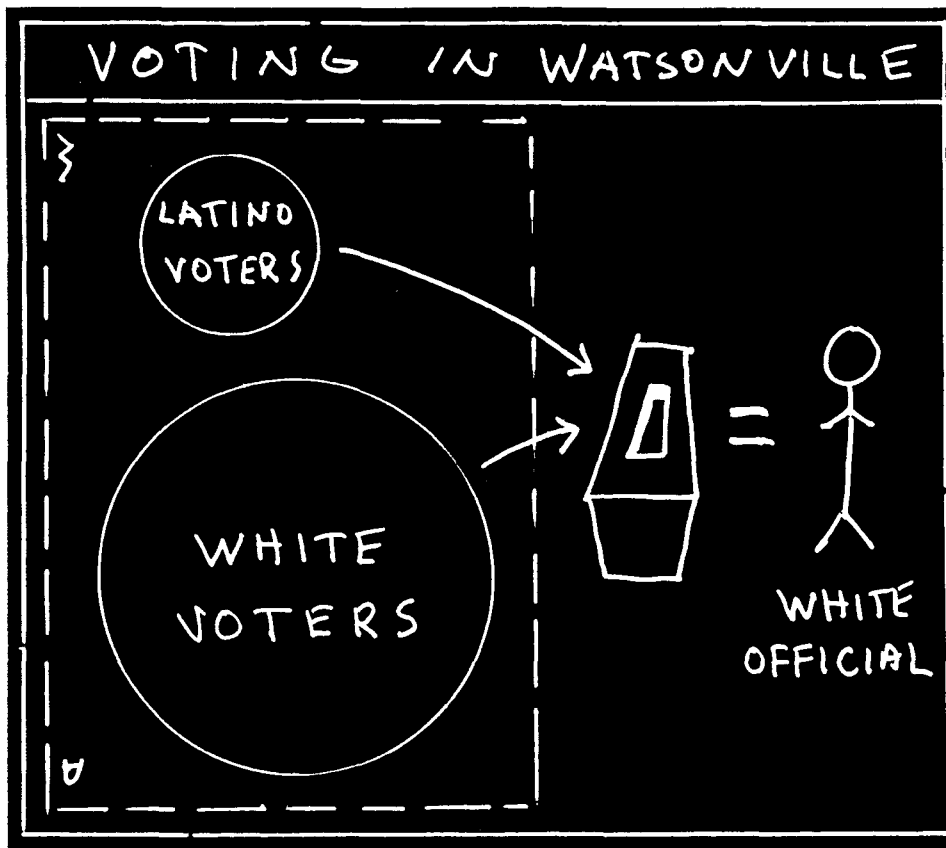
Now, however, democracy here may recapture its allure. Last July, after a suit brought by the Mexican-American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF), the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that Watsonville's at-large election system violated the Voting Rights Act by effectively excluding Hispanics from office. The court determined that the citywide structure of Watsonville's elections favors Anglo candidates, because the majority of registered voters are Anglo, and excludes Hispanic neighborhoods from representation.

As a remedy the court ordered Watsonville to come up with a single-member district system with candidates to be elected from their own neighborhoods. At-large elections discriminate against minorities, the court ruled, only when certain situations exist in a city. There must be a geographically compact minority population, large enough to create a majority in a given district, and they must be shown to support the same candidates. In addition, the Anglo community must be shown to vote against the preferred candidate of the minority community.

The Anglo-dominated city council appealed the ruling to the U.S. Supreme Court, which last month let stand the circuit court ruling. From now on, city government in Watsonville will be *con sabor Chicano*, or flavored with Hispanic influences.

Changing times: Watsonville is in the heart of Steinbeck country, on the fertile coastal plain midway between the college community of Santa Cruz and the Monterey peninsula, about an hour south of San Francisco. It has always depended on immigrant labor to work its fields and canneries. First came the Chinese (who were evicted en masse to the nearby community of Pajaro at the beginning of the century), then the Japanese and Filipinos, and most recently the Mexicans, who hail primarily from a few villages in northern Michoacán.

Today, Watsonville's central plaza could just as well be anywhere in Mexico: children screaming in Spanish chase each other around the central bandstand, old men chat on the benches and exhausted field workers doze on the grass, faces covered with straw cowboy hats. It's been a long time since the last census, but Cruz Gomez, a social worker and one-time council candidate, estimates that Latinos now make up over 60 percent of the population at large, if only a quarter of the registered voters. The town has changed dramatically with the huge influx of Hispanic migrants. Ten years ago, says Gomez, the big department store in downtown Watsonville wouldn't even serve Hispanics. Today, Latinos make up most of its clientele, the Anglos having largely deserted the downtown for suburban shopping malls sprouting up on what once were artichoke fields.



One city's Hispanics win all-important right to win

Despite its proximity to the liberal Bay Area, Watsonville has always had a retrograde political reputation. Two years ago it was the site of a bitter strike in the major canneries. The walkout ended with the workers taking a cut in pay and the cold comfort of seeing the most obdurate cannery forced out of business. "Watsonville has been a very conservative, very traditional farming community," says local attorney Jose Merino. "We have a history of 140 years of very racist incidents."

Merino himself no longer lives in the city, after his wife insisted on raising the family in the more liberal Mid-County area, closer to Santa Cruz. "Her feeling was very strong," says Merino. "Why should our son be exposed to racism more than he has to be? In Mid-County he's just a kid. In Watsonville you grow up acutely aware of being Mexican. Subtly or otherwise, everyone makes you aware that you're different."

Damning the current: The 9th Circuit Court in San Francisco shared Merino's estimation. In its ruling on the Watsonville case, the court took "judicial notice of the ubiquitous historical and current racial discrimination against Hispanics in this part of the United States."

The main force behind the court challenge to Watsonville's electoral system was Joaquin Avila, a past president and general counsel to MALDEF. Avila now claims the distinction of being one of the few attorneys in the state of California working full-time to represent blacks and Latinos in voting rights cases.

His office, in suburban Fremont, Calif., is crammed with precinct maps and demographic data on cities all over the state with inadequate minority representation. "If you're a numerical minority in California," he says, "your candidate will not get elected. In fact, that's what happened in Watsonville from 1971 to 1985. Nine candidates ran for office, and they were all defeated. It wasn't

that they didn't receive support from the Hispanic community, but the Anglo community didn't vote for them."

Of course, the Anglo community in Watsonville doesn't see itself as racist. Rex Clark, a real estate appraiser and 20-year city council veteran, was a leader in the opposition to district elections. He blames the lack of Hispanic officeholders on the "particular candidates" who ran.

"Many of the Hispanic candidates that have run in the past were really not that well known," he says. "Two or three, to the extent they were known, were considered somewhat kind of radical. People like that traditionally have never been elected in Watsonville."

Are the current council members equally distributed throughout the city? "No," replies Clark meekly. "Oddly enough, they're not. We all, with one or two exceptions, live within four or five blocks of each other."

All too familiar: Watsonville provided the model for an unbalanced electoral system, but many other California communities, especially in the coastal and Central Valley areas, can recognize themselves in the picture. In the wake of the Watsonville decision, a lawsuit challenging the at-large system in Salinas won a negotiated move to districts, ratified by the voters last December.

In Stockton, an attempt by the Anglo business community to move away from districts has been stalled by court order, with the case going to trial in June. The biggest battle, however, is over the Los Angeles County board of supervisors. Avila claims that the supervisorial district boundaries there have been gerrymandered so as to split the Hispanic community in half, denying it a representative on the board. The Los Angeles case is expected to go to trial in September.

In Watsonville, the Anglo leadership and the Hispanic community are now in the process of negotiating the precise shape and

number of the court-mandated districts. Gomez, a "somewhat kind of radical" council candidate in 1983, is among the negotiators. She and the rest of the Latino leadership are pressing for seven districts, with the mayor elected by the council. At least three such districts could be expected to have Latino majorities. (After the 1990 census, says Gomez, that number could rise to four or five.)

The current council and mayor, on the other hand, want a six-member council, with the mayor elected at large, which would likely reduce Latino representation to two. Avila and MALDEF are ready to go back to court to get their seven districts. "We don't want to have come this far," says Gomez, "and not have a plan that will give us the most for our population."

Not going back: All observers agree on one thing, at least: that politics in Watsonville will never be the same. Many point to the example of Texas, which went through its own voting rights struggle in the '70s.

"California now is where Texas was in 1974," says Avila. After court rulings against at-large elections in Texas, says Gomez, "Registration and voting increased 80 to 90 percent, and we expect the same."

Gomez hopes that the new Hispanic leadership will present a change of more than skin color and accent on the council. She looks forward to establishing a housing department, for example, or rebuilding the downtown area, where many Latinos live.

"They're literally killing downtown by supporting the development of these [suburban] shopping centers, which are essentially white shopping centers," complains Gomez in her downtown office across from the crowded plaza. "We don't even have a large grocery store here to go to."

There are also signs of changes on the other side. "I think that the conservative, paternalistic community has felt embarrassed," says Jose Merino. "Watsonville has been compared to Selma, Ala. ... I think that the more moderate elements felt that there really is a need to change. The lawsuit has been a real educational tool, not only within the Hispanic community but also within the Anglo community."

Avila sees the move to district elections as a way to make democracy work in a state increasingly dominated by ethnic minorities. "The primary objective of all this should be the creation of a cohesive society," he says. "Given the demographic changes that are occurring in California and the problems and challenges that we are facing, all of these city councils and school boards and county governments are going to need to tap into [their] vast human resources to help solve these problems. We need to develop potential Hispanic and other minority leaders so they can assist us, everyone, in the process of resolving these problems."

"This decision presents a golden opportunity for jurisdictions to start asking themselves, do we have groups in our city that are not present in the city council?" he says. "If they're not, why not? And how can we best bring them onto the city council, and bring government closer to the people?"

Backward Watsonville may, after all, have provided a democracy lesson to the rest of the state.

Paul Rauber reports for the *East Bay Express* in Berkeley, Calif., and National Public Radio's "Latin File."

c 1989 Miles DeCoster

By Joel Bleifuss

Heritage Foundation tries to clear name

The Heritage Foundation is disputing charges that it received a \$2.2-million gift from South Korea's Central Intelligence Agency (KCIA) in the early '80s. If the foundation, a right-wing think tank, did indeed accept such a gift, it may have violated federal law, which requires groups funded by other nations' governments to register as "foreign agents" (see "In Short," January 11). In December *Korea Update*—the publication of the Korea Coalition, a Washington, D.C.-based human rights group—reported that the Heritage Foundation, after receiving a gift of \$1.1 million from the Korean government, established the Asian Studies Center. The center in turn named as its first fellow one of South Korean former President Chun Doo Hwan's closest advisers, Gen. Huh Wha Pyung, a former director of military intelligence. The Heritage Foundation subsequently provided all members of Congress with reports that supported the Chun dictatorship. Daryl Plunk, a visiting fellow at the foundation's Asian Studies Center, says that it was the Federation of Korean Industries, not the KCIA, that gave the Heritage foundation \$2.2 million. The Korea Coalition now admits that Plunk is right, the Federation of Korean Industries did give the money. But the coalition points out that an investigation by the Korean National Assembly in May 1988 indicates that the Federation of Korean Industries was coerced into making the donation by the KCIA. Plunk told *In These Times*, "There are absolutely no serious allegations or evidence that Korean government pressure had anything to do with the Federation of Korean Industries' donation to the Heritage Foundation. There simply was one off-the-cuff, unsubstantiated allegation made during the course of hundreds of hours of hearing in the Korean National Assembly probing various allegations against the previous president." But in May 1988, the Korean monthly *Chosun Wolgan* reported that the Heritage Foundation received from the Federation of Korean Industries, at the behest of the KCIA, \$1.1 million in 1983, and another \$1.1 million in 1986. An anonymous Federation of Korean Industries official is quoted as saying, "How miserable it is that we even have to give to support foreign study institutes." When questioned by the Korean National Assembly in November 1988, the former director of the KCIA, Chang Se Tong, explained, "As far as I know the Heritage Foundation is supported by various countries and operated under its own financial management." The Heritage Foundation, a flagship of the Reagan presidency, is big on patriotism. But patriotism to whom?

Death and taxes

Cockroaches aren't the only pests that will survive a nuclear holocaust. According to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), nuclear war may hinder, but it will not stop, the federal government from collecting taxes. The IRS, at the request of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, has added a new section to its employee operations guide, *Internal Revenue Manual*. According to the new chapter, "National Emergency Operations," within 30 days of a nuclear conflict, the IRS will be back in business with all operations "concentrated on collecting the taxes that will produce the greater revenue yield." The chapter reads in part: "In the event of a national emergency (especially resulting from nuclear attack), the primary function of the service is to support the secretary of the Treasury. This support as a minimum will consist of analyzing and reporting upon emergency tax legislation, prescribing regulations and forms, issuing rulings and technical information of an emergency nature.... On the premise that the collection of delinquent accounts would be most adversely affected, and in many cases would be impossible in a disaster area, the service will concentrate on the collection of current taxes. However, in areas where the taxpaying potential is substantially unimpaired, enforced collection of delinquent accounts will be continued."

Politics for busy boomers

Lois Barber of Amherst, Mass., is doing her best to make sure the IRS never has to worry about accounts "adversely affected" by a nuclear war. In 1985, Barber, an organizer of Western Massachusetts Freeze, realized two things. The first was that the freeze movement—although it had educated millions of people about the danger of nuclear war—had failed to provide an ongoing way for these people to act on their convictions. The second was that people with lives to lead, kids to raise and careers to cultivate did not have time to be as politically active as they



Skateboarder Oden Connolly of Palo Alto, Calif., above, does a backside grind. Below, members of Jak's Team play skate hockey.

Rebels on a roll: skating toward the next millennium

SAN FRANCISCO—"Great boneless, dude, but can you ollie?" This question can be heard wherever sneakered feet are planted on painted 30-inch boards attached to four urethane wheels that roll down streets and "half pipe" ramps.

Skateboarding was popularized by California surfers in the early '70s to wile away surfless days. Since then it has evolved into a multimillion-dollar industry with its own language, wardrobe demands, a national organization that helps skateboarders fight local ordinances against the sport, and now, an exchange program between Soviet and American enthusiasts.

In the fall of 1987, Tom Terrell, a Palo Alto, Calif., coffeehouse worker and skateboarder, saw an

obscure notice in the *San Francisco Chronicle* that read: "Comrade Skateboarders: There are 15 small skateboarding clubs in the Soviet Union, and they're looking for contacts with skateboarders in the U.S., especially in California, the cradle of the sport. Contact Radio Moscow." Terrell soon contacted a Young Communist League skateboard club in Moscow. He is now organizing a Soviet tour for 20 skaters, age 17 to 22.

The Californians' summer visit to Moscow may boost plans to hold an international skateboard championship in Bamberg, West Germany, that will coincide with the 1992 Olympics in Barcelona.

Bridging the gap between the individual and team sport perspective is *Thrasher*, a San Francisco-based "zine" with a circulation of 350,000. *Thrasher's* 31-year-old publisher, Kevin Thatcher, estimates that there are 10 million to 20 million skateboarders in Japan, Australia, China, Brazil, Northern Europe and the U.S.

Although *Thrasher* covers com-

petitive and commercial skate events, Thatcher says his readers are "the more individual, more creative kids, who like sports, but don't necessarily want the team sport life."

In addition to covering the anti-establishment ideas found in punk, *Thrasher* tackles topics that paint a portrait of the typical skateboarder. For example, it features pinball and snowboarding stories, recipes for "scarf material," paens to shoes (a nearly religious topic among skateboarders) and reviews of performance art, movies and videos.

In San Francisco, a group of older, urban skaters have developed a lifestyle defined by the hills on which the city is built. "The world's largest skateboard ramp" is how 34-year-old skater Duke Crestfield describes the city. Crestfield, a Stanford University engineering graduate who works for a low-income inner-city housing project, describes city skateboarders like himself as "groty street skaters who are loners and rebels."

The other urban skaters are the daytime "suits" who sometimes ride

their boards to work. In Chicago two such "suits," benefits consultant David Seifried and *In These Times*' co-business manager Kevin O'Donnell, have constructed a "mini-mini-ramp" that is three feet high, eight feet wide and 17 feet long in Seifried's apartment.

Crestfield draws a line between both types of city skaters and their suburban counterparts, who have what he calls a "Little League mentality" that supports the machinery of the skateboard industry. But city and suburban skaters have a lot in common—like the urge to organize.

Crestfield and Shawn Ford, a 21-year-old janitor, are the prime movers behind Shred of Dignity, a would-be national skateboarders union that has its origins in the movement that sprang up when San Francisco was considering a ban on the sport. The city's view, which is collaborated by police reports, is that skateboarders wrack the nerves of the pedestrians who form moving obstacles for the urban skater's slalom course.

Shred of Dignity succeeded in preventing the ban, and the organization, headquartered in a warehouse,

now has 750 members worldwide. Besides lending moral support to skaters fighting similar civic battles, this radical political organization publishes *Ragazine*, a magazine filled with skateboard graffiti such as "the butt holes [pot holes] are the best" and "skate free or die." It also features tips for young runaways, and for San Francisco's skaters it lists free eats, the sites of free clothes boxes and the location of outdoor ramps.

Skaters from hell: On a Sunday afternoon a gathering of urban skaters can be found in the parking lot under the struts of the San Francisco-Oakland bridge. They are playing "skate hockey," an invention of the Jak's Team, a 100-member group whose membership spans Northern California and Oregon and Washington states. According to 32-year-old Dick Wagon (his legal name is Tom Scott), members of this organization "just know when they should belong." Jak's Team members are described by some as the Hell's Angels of skating.

Skate hockey uses an empty beer can for a puck and requires that

members provide their own hockey stick and play by rules similar to the honor system in ultimate frisbee. The game combines the same physical demands of soccer, the team strategy and pivot action of basketball and the passing action of field hockey. Add stipulations against bodily contact and violence and slightly tipsy skateboards dressed in a motley assortment of protective sports devices, and you have skate hockey.

Contrary to the stereotypes, skateboarders tend to disdain drugs and violence. Says *Thrasher's* Thatcher, "Their sport activity releases aggression in a natural way."

And so, increasingly in back alleys throughout the world, you can see grimacing daredevils from age six into thirtysomething, perfecting the ollie maneuver, which, says Terrell, is "your basic trick—it means to alternately apply pressure to the back and front of the skateboard, with feet on top and hands below, to become airborne."

—Julie Gilden

A version of this story was distributed by the Pacific News Service.

Drugs and the contras: Washington looks the other way

WASHINGTON, D.C.—After nearly three years of investigation, Sen. John Kerry (D-MA) has released his long-awaited report on contra drug smuggling and other examples of U.S. tolerance of narcotics trafficking.

The investigation by Kerry's subcommittee on narcotics, terrorism and international operations was hampered by administration stonewalling. Federal agencies were forbidden to cooperate with the inquiry. As an assistant U.S. attorney general told the subcommittee, the Justice Department, Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and FBI went as far as to meet and "discuss how Sen. Kerry's efforts...to hold hearings on the [Miami contra smuggling] case could be undermined."

Kerry's fellow Democrats showed little support for the potentially explosive probe. In an effort to appease critics, Kerry broadened his hearings beyond their original focus on the Nicaraguan rebels. He also took every opportunity to soften the political implications of his preliminary findings.

When the report was completed, it fell victim to further political sabotage. In an effort to get bipartisan approval, Kerry's staff worked closely with subcommittee member Sen. Mitch McConnell (R-KY) to revise it. According to a source familiar with the investigation who asked not to be named, McConnell, a close ally of President George Bush, forced through "dozens of changes." But when the new watered-down report was released, McConnell pulled out of a joint

press conference, denouncing the report as "one-sided."

The compromises hobble the final report. Crucial connections, key evidence and important witnesses are ignored. But in spite of this, the report shows a more systematic connection between the contras and the cocaine cartels than had previously been documented.

For example, the report reveals that "the principal company used by the contras in Honduras to transport supplies and personnel" was SETCO, an aviation firm owned by accused drug smugglers. SETCO was headed by Juan Matta Ballesteros, the indicted trafficker whose illegal extradition to the U.S. caused riots in Honduras last year. Matta is identified as the Colombian cocaine cartel's "point man in Honduras specifically and Central America generally."

One of Matta's pilots, Frank Moss, went on to start his own company, Hondu Carib, which also transports supplies for the contras. Moss, under investigation by the DEA since 1979, gave partial ownership of Hondu Carib to Mario Calero, brother of contra strongman Adolfo Calero.

The report also says the contras used a drug money laundry known as DIACSA to conceal money transfers from Lt. Col. Oliver North.

Why cocaine traffickers would cultivate ties to the contras was explained by Werner Lotz, a drug smuggler and personal pilot to two Costa Rican presidents. Referring to contra operations in Costa Rica, Lotz testified that "weapons for the contras came from Panama on small planes carrying mixed loads that included drugs. The pilots unloaded the weapons, refueled and headed north toward the U.S. with drugs.... Drug pilots soon began to

use the contra airstrips to refuel, even when there were no weapons to unload. They knew that the authorities would not check the airstrips because the war was 'protected.'"

Rather than pressuring the contras to break with drug-connected companies, the Reagan administration gave more than \$800,000 in "humanitarian aid" funds to SETCO, DIACSA and two other corporations believed to be fronts for traffickers, the report reveals. The Justice Department facilitated drug traffic through Honduras by shutting down the DEA office in Tegucigalpa, Honduras. One key CIA supervisor of the contra operation, John Hull, now faces trial in Costa Rica on contra-related drug smuggling charges.

With nearly all federal officials refusing to cooperate with its probe, the subcommittee was forced to rely in many cases on testimony taken during other investigations. One quote in the report comes from CIA Central American Task Force Chief Alan Fiers' testimony to the congressional Iran-contra committee. He said, "With respect to [drug trafficking by] the resistance forces...it is not a couple of people, it is a lot of people."

This seemingly devastating admission by a high-ranking CIA official was not considered noteworthy enough to fit in the Iran-contra committees' several-hundred-page report. With official Washington showing no interest in taking the drug issue any further, another statement, also ignored by the Iran-contra committee, may stand as the final word on the scandal. Col. Robert Earl, Oliver North's National Security Council colleague, testified, "There was a lot of corruption and greed and drugs, and it was a real mess."

—Jim Naureckas

might like. So Barber founded 20/20 Vision, a grass-roots lobbying effort that she says gives the politically committed "something meaningful to do that can fit into their busy lives." 20/20 Vision asks its members to commit \$20 a year and 20 minutes a month to lobby against the nuclear arms race. Organized on the congressional district level, the group now has 48 autonomous "district projects" in 23 states. Every month, the organizers of each district project send their subscribers a postcard with information on a specific issue, along with the name, address and phone number of officials who should be lobbied on that issue. Joan King, of Sautee, Ga., is the 20/20 Vision organizer in the conservative rural 9th Congressional District in the hills of northwest Georgia. King explains why she became involved with the group: "I should be a grandmother, and I'm not. My children, all three of them, have expressed a lack of confidence in the future. My son said at one time that he thinks it is too late for his generation. My daughter, who is married, feels that there might not be a long-term future. They were not raised that way. I certainly didn't preach pessimism to them." King blames the threat of nuclear annihilation for her lack of grandchildren. In May she will send out cards to the 200 people on her mailing list asking them to lobby Georgia's two U.S. senators in support of a 1990 United Nations conference to amend the 1963 Partial Test Ban Treaty into a complete ban on nuclear testing. Says King, "I'm also asking people to inform themselves, because obviously they are not going to find out about this from the media." For more information on 20/20 Vision call 1-800-669-1782.

Bullish on babies

At 1 p.m. on April 27, the Ad Hoc Committee to List Babies on the Big Board will demonstrate in front of the New York Stock Exchange to demand that babies be listed and traded like stocks. The organization, which is committed to setting a fair market value on American babies, responds to the question "Why?" by insisting that babies are already listed. As a press release from the group explains, "Decision are made every day on the worth of infants. The only issue is the haphazard fashion in which those decision have been made." For example, the group points out that the federal budget "appropriates \$4 million to the National Board for the Promotion of Rifle Practice (an organization that pays the National Rifle Association to operate rifle ranges) and about the same amount to emergency nursery care for homeless infants." (The group acknowledges that President Bush's 1990 budget plans to "clear up this budgetary anomaly by eliminating emergency nursery care.") Although the committee insists that it does "not condone the outright sale of babies," it does make the point that "there are plenty of American babies in legitimate need (and with elimination of a few more social programs, we can significantly increase their number)." The group asks: "For these truly needy babies, why not find wealthy adoptive parents among the more highly industrialized nations or, perhaps, the oil producers.... After all, America has been importing babies from Guatemala, India, South Korea and many other countries for years. With a little leadership from Wall Street, we could close that import-export gap."

Make a stink

Although destroying Exxon credit cards should be de rigueur for all environmentally minded folks, an anonymous *In These Times* reader in San Francisco comes to the defense of the Alaskan fishing industry with the following piece of advice: "Don't just sit there carping and floundering! Get off your perch and get polluters on the hook for just the halibut!...Send a dead fish to the chairman of Exxon!" The writer requests that the next time you go shopping, you buy a fish, seal it in a plastic bag, put the bagged fish in a stamped, addressed envelope (20 cents per ounce) and mail it to: Chairman Lawrence L.G. Rawl, Exxon Corporation, 1251 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10020.

Workers Memorial Day

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, a federal agency, estimates that each year at least 7 million U.S. workers are exposed to carcinogenic chemicals while on the job. This, along with the Reagan administration's eight-year effort to cripple the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), adds up to a major health threat to the American worker. To call attention to OSHA's failings, the AFL-CIO is organizing nationwide activities for a "Workers Memorial Day," April 28, the 19th anniversary of OSHA's founding.

By David Moberg

SIX TIMES LATE LAST YEAR WORKERS AT THE Delhaize chain of supermarkets in Belgium occupied a store and shut it down for a day. They weren't striking for more money. They were striking for the rights of American workers denied a chance to organize by the hard-line anti-union tactics of Delhaize's subsidiary, Food Lion.

Such full-blown expressions of international labor solidarity are rare. But changes in both the world economy and the national politics of many industrialized countries are finally forcing unions to take global solidarity much more seriously.

The land of giants: Corporate and governmental strategies have both been increasingly dominated by the global marketplace in manufacturing, finance and merchandising. Among other things, that means that workers for any one corporate giant, such as Ford or Nestlé, are likely to spread across many countries. Also, workers within a particular industry in any one nation are likely to work for companies with different national origins.

At the same time, these changes in the world economy have destabilized many of the post-World War II domestic compacts of business, government and labor in many industrialized countries. This "Keynesian corporatism," with "labor huddling close to government for protection," has "completely broken down," argues Denis MacShane, communications director of the International Metalworkers' Federation (IMF). "Bit by bit the unions of the industrialized North have seen driven home very hard in the last decade that the [national] boat in which they were sailing now only has room for two passengers, government and employers, and workers are being tossed into the seas."

Those employees must now turn to each other to prevent corporations from playing workers against each other to depress working conditions everywhere. That is almost an "obsession" for European unions now, MacShane says, as they look toward the 1992 integration of Europe and ponder the consequences for the more heavily unionized, higher-wage workforces of Germany and Scandinavia.

Ultimately, the world's labor movements, abandoned to the competitive seas, must also unite to raise wages and living standards in the poorer countries, both by changing government policies (such as forgiveness of much Third-World debt) and by strengthening unions in poor and newly industrializing countries. If labor wants to avoid predatory trade practices and protectionist policies, it must raise worldwide buying power for the glut of goods Asian and Latin American workers make but can't buy.

A gift worth giving: One of the most striking outcomes of the rise of multinational corporations and of the growing foreign ownership of U.S. business is that "increasingly North American unions are asking for as well as giving international labor solidarity," according to Joy Anne Grune, North American regional secretary of the International Union of Food Workers (IUF).

The most important solidarity may continue to come from industrialized countries to the Third World, such as support for Guatemalan strikers at Coca-Cola or Lunafil, for union freedom in Chile or for the rights of IBM and Motorola workers to organize in South Korea (as they have recently done). But even U.S. workers can benefit, especially

Workers challenged by the global marketplace

when unions are strong in the home base of a multinational that tries to crush unions here. As Joe Uehlein, special projects director of the Industrial Union Department (IUD) of the AFL-CIO, notes, "Everybody likes to talk about international solidarity, but when you get kicked in the pants, you jump more."

Growing U.S. interest in calling on international solidarity also "is part of the increased

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receptivity of American labor to non-traditional tactics," argues Brian Turner, IUD executive assistant to the president. "Too much of the old formulation of 'deal at the bargaining table, strike if you get in trouble' has stopped working. You have to broaden horizons."

Food Lion is a case in point. After Delhaize bought majority control in 1974, Food Lion expanded rapidly throughout the U.S. Southeast, driving out many union and non-union competitors by paying very low wages and offering virtually no benefits to a workforce it kept unorganized with a vindictively anti-union campaign. As Food Lion began to encroach on the heavily unionized Washington, D.C., market, United Food and Commercial Workers Local 400 tried to organize the stores and mount a consumer boycott.

In 1984 they first met with Belgian union leaders, appealing not only to empathy but self-interest. Local 400 official Mike Earman pointed out to Belgian unionists that their bargaining power could be severely eroded by Delhaize's growing U.S. operations and profits. After visiting the U.S. and discovering that the UFCW wasn't exaggerating about Delhaize—which deals straightforwardly with its Belgian unions—Belgian labor leaders started their campaign "to stop repression of American workers," including the strikes.

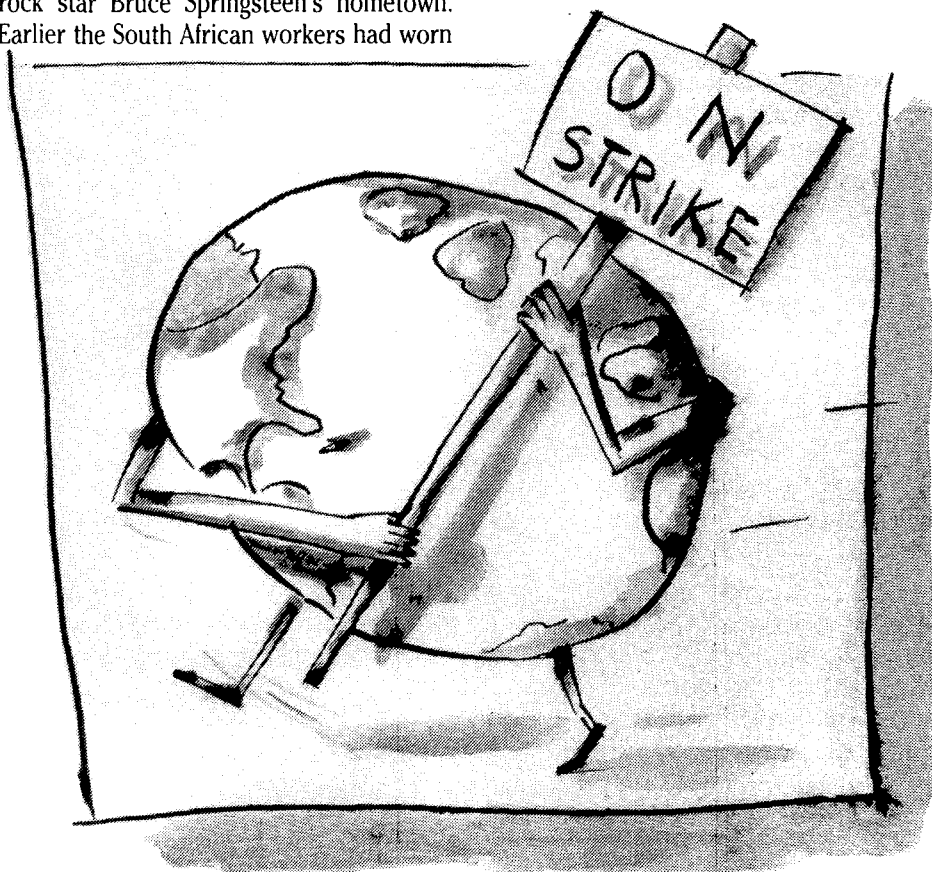
Free Freehold, free South Africa: Three years ago, 400 South African workers walked off their jobs for four hours at a 3M manufacturing plant in support of workers in Freehold, N.J., who were fighting to stop a shutdown of their audio tape factory in rock star Bruce Springsteen's hometown. Earlier the South African workers had worn

T-shirts emblazoned with Springsteen-inspired slogans—"Don't Abandon Freehold, My Home Town/No Retreat, No Surrender"—into their own negotiating sessions. Freehold organizer Stan Fischer said the South African workers were convinced that they made bigger gains than expected because 3M negotiators were intimidated by the show of international solidarity. So impressed were the South African 3M employees that they asked for enough T-shirts for the whole workforce and walked out on their sympathy strike.

In other expressions of support, South African workers joined in Jobs With Justice protests organized last Labor Day by U.S. unions. And South African workers for the Courtalds textile giant instituted an overtime ban to support Clothing and Textile unionizing efforts in the U.S. Black South African workers, who have the most to lose, have been among the most militant in extending international support. But they have also received needed solidarity: the UAW has been leading a campaign that recently got jailed union leader Moses Mayekiso out on bail, and German metalworkers negotiated into their contracts with Volkswagen, BMW and Daimler-Benz worker rights that the companies must respect in their overseas operations.

"They recognize injustice everywhere and know that solidarity is the key," argues Nomonde Ngubo, a founder of the South African National Union of Miners who now works for the United Mine Workers on international relations and the international boycott of Shell. The Shell boycott serves mutual interests: the corporation is a major bulwark of the South African economy and

The multinationals are driving unions into new forms of internationalism for survival.



is the financial force behind the viciously anti-union A.T. Massey coal company in the U.S. But miners have discovered other international points of unity. In March an international conference of coal miners met in Harare, Zimbabwe, to begin fighting for international safety standards.

Swedish unions and their allies in government put pressure on Electrolux after that Swedish multinational hired union busters to defeat an organizing campaign at a Tappan range subsidiary in Tennessee. As a result of pressure, the company did not hire a union buster for a subsequent campaign at another Tennessee site. The union won at the second site, but then management wouldn't sign the contract. However, when managers there discovered its union was going to Sweden to the recently formed world council of Electrolux unions, they promptly signed the contract. The new council also promised to help on future organizing campaigns.

Now the Swedish ministry of industries is arguing—contrary to the standard multinational corporate dodge that their subsidiaries are autonomous and simply follow local laws and customs—that Swedish multinationals must follow European guidelines. Some Swedish legislators have even proposed that multinationals contribute to a special fund to help workers organize in their overseas plants.

New cooperation: Although it is extremely unlikely that coordinated bargaining will develop in the foreseeable future, there is much interest in developing international labor rights standards (see *In These Times*, Oct. 26, 1988). Advocates want such standards included in the revised General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, made law in the new European Economic Community, and added to different countries' trade bills—as the U.S. Congress has done on four occasions. Eventually, such international standards could lead other countries to apply trade pressure to the U.S. to respect internationally recognized workers' rights.

Much of the new cooperation has taken place through international trade secretariats such as the IUF and IMF, industry groupings of unions that date back to the late 19th century but have gained importance. Increasingly within these secretariats, unions are forming councils of unions worldwide that represent workers at particular employers such as Ford or Electrolux. Other unions are forming their own direct international links, especially in relations with unions in less-developed countries. In large part this has been done to circumvent the rigidly ideological Cold War politics imposed on international labor relations by the AFL-CIO (see *In These Times*, Feb. 22).

As solidarity becomes more necessary for economic reasons, Cold War dictates may wither. "Increasingly unions are concerned with [international solidarity] to achieve economic ends," Grune said. "Eventually this will lead to us using a standard of what unions have a presence at companies" in establishing relations. And Uehlein adds, if foreign unions representing workers in a company he is fighting happen to have some left-wing or communist links, like the CGT in France, "you have to open up a dialogue. We can't sit back and say we can't talk with them."

For more information on this subject, see the latest issue of *Labor Research Review*, entitled "Solidarity Across Borders." It is available for \$7 from 3411 West Diversey Ave., Chicago, IL 60647.

c 1989 Peter Hannan

By Salim Muwakkil

BLACK SOLDIERS DIED DISPROPORTIONATELY in the Vietnam conflict, but few African-Americans joined this country's anti-war movement. The bloated military budget consumes resources that could provide desperately needed aid for the expanding black underclass, but civil rights leaders seldom make common cause with groups organized to curb military spending.

Despite reports that toxic wastes and other environmental hazards are inordinately concentrated in black neighborhoods, African-Americans show little interest in the ecology movement. The AIDS epidemic is now spreading most rapidly among black residents of the inner cities, but few AIDS organizers are black.

These examples illustrate a pattern that has long troubled activists: African-Americans tend not to participate in progressive movements for social change. The glaring absence of African-Americans at the massive April 9 March for Women's Equality/Women's Lives has churned up new debate on the issue.

According to an April 16 article in the *New York Times*, an estimated 95 percent of those marching for abortion rights were white. And this is despite recent findings that abortion rates are higher for young black women than for any other group in the country. What's more, if abortions are made illegal, poor women will be most at risk of injury from botched attempts.

Apathy of poverty: Many civil rights leaders insist that low economic and educational status is the primary reason blacks remain disengaged from left-leaning protest movements. The majority of African-Americans are too engaged in the rigors of survival to care much about the abstract evils of liberal protestors, they argue; poverty breeds civil apathy among poor people of all races.

Black nationalists claim, on the other hand, that black Americans stay away from white-led protest movements because they distrust whites' intentions. "African-Americans have learned to be very wary of European-Americans who claim to have their best interests at heart," explains Conrad Worrill, president of the Black United Front, the largest secular black nationalist organization in the country.

"And, by and large, they're right," Worrill adds. "Our interests seldom converge."

Black people get involved if they believe the cause serves their interests, nationalists argue. Marcus Garvey's movement is often cited as evidence that large numbers of blacks can be activated if properly motivated. Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association attracted a following of millions at its peak in the early '20s by preaching a message of African nationalism and economic independence. The sit-ins, freedom marches and demonstrations of the civil rights era are additional examples of black participation in social protest.

Nationalists contend that the masses of blacks have little interest in issues of nuclear disarmament, ideological competition and East-West tensions in general because they see them, correctly, as family squabbles in the European family. Legally available abortions are condemned by most nationalists as part of a general white strategy to debilitate the black population. The AIDS epidemic, similarly ascribed to white skulduggery, is demonized and blithely dismissed.



Not Jesse Jackson, but many black church leaders have shunned social issues.

Black America's apathy about social movements

Forgotten mission? Many African-Americans who call themselves progressives blame the church for blacks' lack of movement activity. "If you want to reach people

POLITICS

in the black community, you have to go through the church," explains Arnold Harris-Hudson of the Kupon Network, a Chicago-based organization formed five years ago to educate the African-American community about its special vulnerability to the AIDS threat.

"But the church has been very slow to open its doors to us," Harris-Hudson complains. "Despite all of the information coming out about the increasing numbers of black AIDS victims, the black church is still reluctant to help educate the black community. The institution is intensely homophobic and has little empathy for society's losers."

As a case manager for the group—"kupon" means "stay well" in Kiswahili—Harris-Hudson says his many attempts to reach out through the church have left him embittered. "There are some exceptions, but by and large the black church is so consumed in its own moralisms it has forgotten that its mission is to serve the people," he says.

Black abortion rights activists are also critical of the clergy's inordinate influence on African-American leadership, and they blame that influence for holding down black participation in abortion rights demonstrations. Since so many black leaders are preachers, they charge, moralistic posturing or doctrinal dogma is too often substituted for rigorous analysis. Blacks' high level of religious-based leadership evolved out of a unique historical situation, but challenges to that tradition are increasing. Many African-American theorists contend that a new model of secular leadership will be needed to help guide the black community into the next century.

Conservative to the core? Since the African-American community has a core culture that is conservative and strongly religious, many are asking, why should blacks be attracted to causes that are left-oriented and

Was the wedding between blacks and liberalism just a marriage of convenience?

secular? After all, they argue, the recent wedding of blacks to liberalism was merely a marriage of political convenience and was always shaky.

"I've come to believe that African-Americans have always been more socially conservative than their liberal allies have realized," says Farid Muhammad, associate professor of behavioral sciences at East-West University in Chicago. "The causes that have historically excited liberal whites tend to leave blacks cold."

Rev. Jesse Jackson would probably beg to differ. He is perhaps the most progressive of the clergy-based leaders and has embraced the liberal agenda with his Baptist rhetoric. Once a foe of abortion rights, Jackson is now pro-choice. He spoke at the April 9 abortion rights demonstration.

The former presidential candidate speaks often at AIDS benefits and is a regular on the peace activists' lecture circuit. He walks the picket lines at Eastern Airlines and offers succor to residents of shelters for battered women. Jackson's daily itinerary is a veritable agenda of Grade A progressive causes, and he sees no conflict between those and his calling.

"Jesse realizes that black leaders must begin to bridge the gap between sacred and secular," says Rev. Hycle Taylor, former national director of Operation PUSH. "We can't be stuck on old ways of doing things just because we're used to doing them," Taylor says, "and black religious leadership is going to have to wake up to that fact. Just like Jesse did."

But cynics contend that Jackson's visibility in various protest movements has done little to link their concerns to those of his constituent base. "Jackson will go to Washington, D.C., to participate in the AIDS quilt event, but he does very little to help us get our message into black churches right here in Chicago," says Kupon Network's Harris-Hudson.

"I consider myself a feminist, but I didn't feel the urgency to go to that sorority meeting in Washington, D.C.," says Gail Christopher, a Chicago-based health care consultant. "If they had focused on issues like infant mortality or racist education, I would have been more enthusiastic. But they focus on what interests them, and I can't blame them for that. I just can't get fired up for it." Christopher does concede that African-American women stand to lose the most if *Roe vs. Wade* is reversed.

Media blackout: Rep. Ron Dellums (D-CA) is one of Congress' leading authorities on military issues, yet the media seldom taps him for his knowledge. "The media has already made up its mind that blacks are unschooled in military issues, so it ignores the House's most knowledgeable expert because of his color," explains Dellums aide Max Miller.

Miller contends that many blacks shun involvement in larger protest movements because the media convinces them that they would be out of place. "How many U.S. citizens know that the Congressional Black Caucus has offered fiscally sound and socially responsible alternative budgets for the last nine years?" Miller asks. "Not many. Why? Because budgetary expertise is considered beyond the ken of black congressmen, so it never gets reported."

The black nationalist argument is the other side of that coin. By assuming that African-Americans can't find success in a "white racist" society, that assumption can become a self-fulfilling prophecy. □

IN THESE TIMES APRIL 26-MAY 2, 1989 7

By Gordon Lewis

BERLIN

IN THE EARLY '70S, DISGRUNTLED MEMBERS OF West Germany's radical left gave up on non-violent protest and went underground, forming the militant Red Army Fraction (RAF). This terror organization, better known as the Baader-Meinhof Gang, was responsible for a spate of bombings, murders and kidnappings that shocked German society. Although the group was small in number, its spectacular actions received widespread publicity and made the organization appear far more dangerous than it really was.

The Bonn government responded with a tough law-and-order policy, broadening police powers, launching investigations that threatened political and individual rights and rounding up dozens of real and suspected terrorists. By the end of the '70s, most RAF members were dead or in jail, where they tried to carry on their political work. The authorities tightened security procedures in the prisons, separating the "urban guerrillas" from their comrades and even denying them contact with their lawyers.

In February, 50 convicted terrorists began a hunger strike, demanding an end to the overly restrictive conditions of their imprisonment and calling for a relocation and division of "political prisoners" into two large groups. The hunger strike was organized according to an Irish Republican Army strategy. After two weeks all but two of the prisoners stopped fasting temporarily. At the beginning of March, however, the strike began anew, with two prisoners resuming the hunger strike every 14 days.

Kohl's predicament: During the first month and a half of the hunger strike, the

Bonn ponders treatment of hunger-striking prisoners

Bonn government chose to ignore it. However, as winter gave way to spring, the physical condition of some of the prisoners deteriorated to such a degree that Chancellor

WEST GERMANY

Helmut Kohl had no choice but to address the issue. There would be no negotiations with the hunger strikers, he said.

For the moment, Kohl's words will have no deadly effect. On April 15 Karl Heinz Dellwo and Christa Eckes, two prisoners who had been fasting for 11 weeks, agreed to temporarily end their hunger strike in order to prevent, as they put it, "a further escalation of the situation" and to allow time to reach an agreement. While Dellwo and Eckes are safe for now, two of their comrades will soon reach the critical stage when authorities must decide whether to let them die or force-feed them.

Regional Social Democratic Party (SPD) politicians, led by Berlin Mayor Walter Momper, have come out in favor of a negotiated solution. At the end of March Momper called on Bundestag President Rita Süsmuth and Protestant Church leader Jürgen Schmude to serve as intermediaries. While both signaled interest in the plan, the Christian Democrats (CDU) refused to cooperate. They accused Momper of sabotaging federal efforts at reaching a behind-the-scenes solu-

tion. But as Berlin Justice Senator Jutta Limbach pointed out, it was precisely information on these efforts that convinced the new Red/Green ruling coalition—SPDers and Green Party members in several German states—of the need for a new approach.

Socialists and Greens believe that the situation today differs from that of the late '70s, when the threat of jail breaks was acute. After many years in prison, the radicals'

Jailed survivors of the Red Army Fraction have launched hunger strikes to obtain less onerous prison conditions. The Social Democrats are amenable, but the Christian Democrats are being pressured to take a hard-line stance.

commitment to violence has weakened. A declaration by the prisoners that the war against the state is over could be achieved, as in the case of Italy's Red Brigades, by

granting the terrorists the opportunity to discuss their mistakes among themselves. Indeed, the prisoners have hinted that this is what they have in mind.

The political stakes: Momper and other SPDers are quick to point out that a conciliatory position does not imply recognizing the prisoners' claim to being "political." Momper believes that "a strong and self-confident state must be capable of forgiving those who understand and distance themselves from their past crimes."

Needless to say, Kohl's CDU and especially its junior partner, the Bavarian-based Christian Social Union (CSU), don't agree with this assessment. And they can't afford to. In the wake of painful electoral defeats in Berlin and Hesse, brought about by large-scale defection of former supporters to the nationalistic Republicans, the CDU/CSU have no other choice but to take a hard-line stand.

The debate over the hunger strike is one more example of the growing polarization of German society. With the far right already walking a fine line between democracy and authoritarianism, the dead prisoners could compel the young left to give up on the state as well. Already there have been several firebombings.

Renewed violence from the left would seriously threaten the Red/Green coalition. The Alternative List, whose roots lie in the extraparlimentary opposition, would have the unenviable choice of using the power of the state against their own constituency or resigning from the government, eliminating themselves as a parliamentary force for years to come.

Gordon Lewis writes from Berlin on Germany and Eastern Europe.

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By Daniel Lazare

NEW YORK

SLOWLY, VERY SLOWLY, LIKE A GIANT stirring from a deep slumber, the political establishment is beginning to awaken to the enormity of the crisis confronting this city because of drugs and AIDS.

Within the last two years local and state health officials have started funding ex-addicts who make the rounds of the shooting galleries to spread the gospel that sharing needles spreads AIDS. Various public and private groups are distributing kits containing bleach, distilled water, cotton swabs and instructions for sterilizing syringes, along with condoms. Despite cries of murder and genocide last fall from black politicians convinced it would encourage drug use, the city's pioneer needle-exchange experiment is on its way toward enrolling its 100th client.

This is encouraging, but half-hearted and very, very late. It follows years of denial, indifference and official hostility to the population most affected. New York is confronted by a raging forest fire but so far has not gone beyond unrolling a few hoses.

A February report in the *New York Times* stating that 23 percent of the patients treated at a South Bronx emergency room had been infected with the AIDS virus seems to have driven home the point that AIDS is no longer largely a gay disease but is increasingly one of drug users, minorities and the very poor.

As early as 1981, for instance, alert drug counselors began noticing that their clients were dropping like flies with AIDS-like symptoms, yet their efforts to alert medical authorities went unnoticed. Federal drug officials not only failed to promote safer drug use when it became apparent that sharing needles helped spread the HIV virus, but went out of their way to oppose any measures that would make shooting drugs less dangerous. When former New York City Health Commissioner David Sencer proposed legalizing over-the-counter sales of hypodermics, politicians jumped all over him as if he had just proposed legalizing child prostitution. "One of the most harebrained ideas I've heard from city government," declared City Council President Carol Bellamy. As a result, an eminently sensible idea that could have prevented thousands of cases of HIV infection was dropped, and the infection rate among addicts continued to soar.

User unfriendly: The results today are so catastrophic that even the most obtuse politicians have been forced to take notice. Health officials estimate that 50 percent of the city's 200,000 intravenous drug users (or IVDUs, as they're known) have been infected by the AIDS virus, while private AIDS activists say the rate may be as high as 80 percent. Thousands of non-drug-using women have contracted the virus through sex with an IVDU (no one knows how many), while between 1,601 to 4,412 children have gotten it by being born to HIV-positive parents. By 1993, when the city expects to average more than 10,000 new AIDS cases per year, 73 percent of them will be black or Hispanic, and 50 percent will be IVDUs. After settling in among a relatively affluent population of Manhattan gays, the disease has leaped across the social spectrum and is now striking hardest at the poorest of the poor in Harlem and the outer boroughs.

The history of drug-related AIDS in New York, which has by far the largest problem in the country, is an illustration of the maxim

that just as power flows ultimately from the barrel of a gun, medical attention is ultimately a function of political power. To say that junkies are not in a position to push for increased medical care is an understatement.

By virtue of their legal status, they are unable to push for anything at all. While gays constitute a strong and cohesive community, IVDUs are scattered, isolated and outlawed. Unlike addicts in Holland, who are free to join a legally recognized "junkie union," it is as inconceivable to imagine IVDUs in this country joining a demonstration for better treatment as it is to imagine them fielding a lobbyist in Washington.

Unable to demand adequate medical care, addicts are consistently denied it. Rand L. Stoneburner of the New York City Department of Health recently estimated that perhaps half of all drug-related AIDS deaths go unreported. The reason, according to other AIDS workers, is that many either die in the streets or, if they are able to stagger into an emergency room in Brooklyn or the South Bronx, are met by harried, overworked physicians who would rather write them off to pneumonia or heart disease than commence an expensive, difficult, and ultimately futile program of treatment for AIDS. While affluent AIDS victims can avail themselves of a variety of treatments, from AZT to antibacterial aerosol sprays, junkies are denied the bare minimum.

"I remember going through the records, saying something is wrong here, something is wrong," recalled Yolanda Serrano of her years as a counselor in a Brooklyn methadone clinic. "Between 1974 and 1981, we had three deaths—one natural, one homicide and one cirrhosis of the liver. Between 1981 and 1988, there were 68 deaths, yet none of my patients were ever diagnosed with AIDS. The death certificates said endocarditis,

renal failure, heart attacks, pneumonia, anything but AIDS. I kept talking and talking and carrying on, but no one would listen."

Another factor is a widespread, neo-Moral Majority view that whatever junkies get, they deserve. AIDS was nature's "awful retribution" on people who "have declared war

In the nation's biggest AIDS city, too little, too late is better than nothing.

upon nature," as right-wing Pat Buchanan said of gays in 1983. It was the wages of sin.

In 1985, as Ronald Bayer recounts in his new book, *Private Acts, Social Consequences*, public health officials in Los Angeles ran into a firestorm when they began distributing copies of a pamphlet advising addicts not to share needles but to obtain their own "works" and clean them with alcohol after each use. Members of the board of supervisors complained that the pamphlet amounted to "official approval of the government of the county and city of Los Angeles toward drug use," and the pamphlet had to be yanked. The same year, the National Institute on Drug Abuse let it be known at an AIDS conference that "NIDA does not feel comfortable sending information which tells drug abusers not to use dirty needles . . . [because] NIDA's position is based on [the clear] message, 'Do Not Use Drugs.'"

Opposition was even more vituperative, if possible, in New York when Sencer unveiled his clean-needle program the same year. Bellamy's "harebrained scheme" remark, made when she was preparing a bid for mayor against Ed Koch, was followed by others from

politicians in a similar vein. Negative reaction came from cops, prosecutors and virtually the entire black and Hispanic political establishment, including nationally known politicians like Rep. Charles Rangel of Harlem.

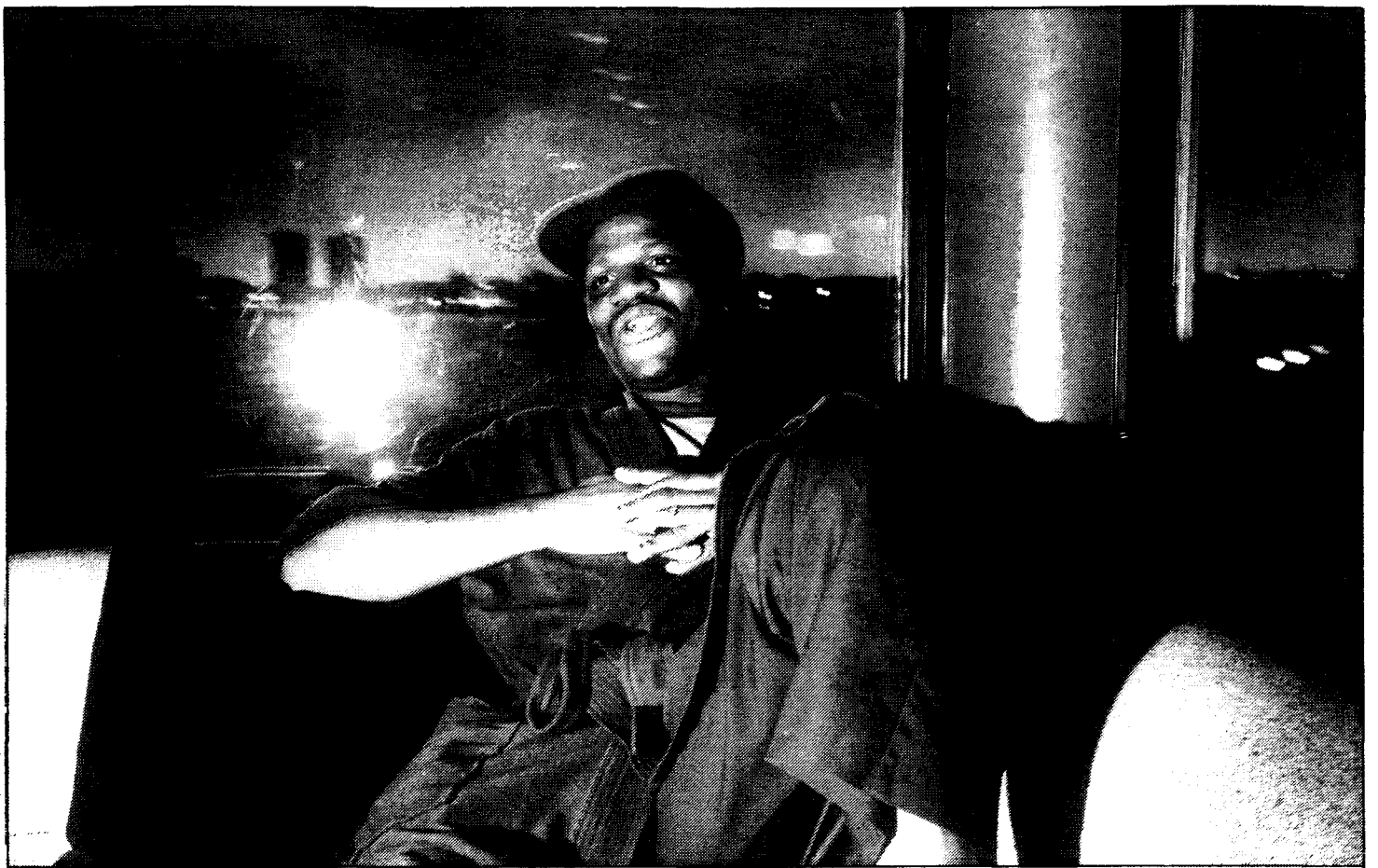
The reasons for this hostility range from the political to the moral—the heavy investment by Rangel and other black politicians in the war on drugs; the stern, moralistic, just-say-no line advanced by Cardinal John J. O'Connor, the Rev. Jesse Jackson, and just about every clergyman in between; and the simple fact that working-class blacks and Hispanics trying to raise themselves out of poverty are tired of junkies who steal, turn tricks, and sell drugs to kids.

The response may have been predictable, but so were the consequences, i.e., the rising rate of HIV infection, evidence of a spread of infection to children and non-IVDU women, and the slowly dawning realization that something had to be done.

Small successes: Something was done. Beginning in 1987, groups like Yolanda Serrano's Association for Drug Abuse Prevention and Treatment (ADAPT) began receiving state and federal funds to hire and train outreach workers, usually ex-addicts, to instruct them in the art of needle sterilization. Other outreach programs received funding as well. ADAPT began working with IVDU streetwalkers, holding discussion groups, stressing safe sex and safe drug use, and passing out bleach kits and condoms by the handful.

The city's clean-needle experiment, which now operates out of an office a few blocks from City Hall, is another milestone. While too small and limited to have much validity from a medical point of view, public health experts say it may prepare the body politic for a broader, more ambitious project in the near future. There's hope it will, although it will still be a matter of too little, too late. Despite these tentative steps, the epidemic is still outpacing all official efforts to control it. While needle sterilization is useful, as long as syringes themselves are illegal, junkies

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AIDS in the city: Robert Allen, 33, who has since died, at a hospice in New York's Greenwich Village.

In New York AIDS soars while politicians hide out

By Paul Rykoff Coleman

NEW YORK

RAYMOND CHARNICK, 37, WON'T HAVE TO DIE in jail. A strapping six-footer whose appearance belies the fact that he has AIDS, he was paroled from Fishkill prison in upstate New York at the end of February. His first stop on the outside was at St. Clare's in Manhattan. A one-time general hospital, it has become one of the largest AIDS care facilities in the country. New York's Department of Correctional Services (DOCS) has a contract with St. Clare's to provide care to inmates like Charnick.

Parole may mean that Charnick will live a little longer. Statistics show that deaths from AIDS come faster in prison than on the outside.

"We are trying to get people in more appropriate settings in which to die," says David B. Hopkins, counsel to the New York State Assembly's Committee on Corrections.

Specifically, Hopkins is talking about a proposed medical parole bill that would allow a prisoner with AIDS or another terminal illness to be released into the care of a hospital, hospice, family members or others willing to accept the responsibility.

But Hopkins also worries about other, broader aspects of the AIDS problem in prison.

The disease is challenging both the way medical care is provided behind bars and certain assumptions about prisoners' rights. Inmates and their advocates say prison medical services are unable to provide adequate care for an increasing number of HIV-infected inmates. Their charges include the following:

- prisoners get less care than those on the outside;
- infirmaries are often understaffed, with poorly trained medical personnel;
- prisoners die in ignorance of their HIV infection;
- death comes faster behind bars;
- prisoners with HIV are often segregated, isolated and stigmatized, while their psychological needs are ignored; and
- legally required treatment may be summarily denied.

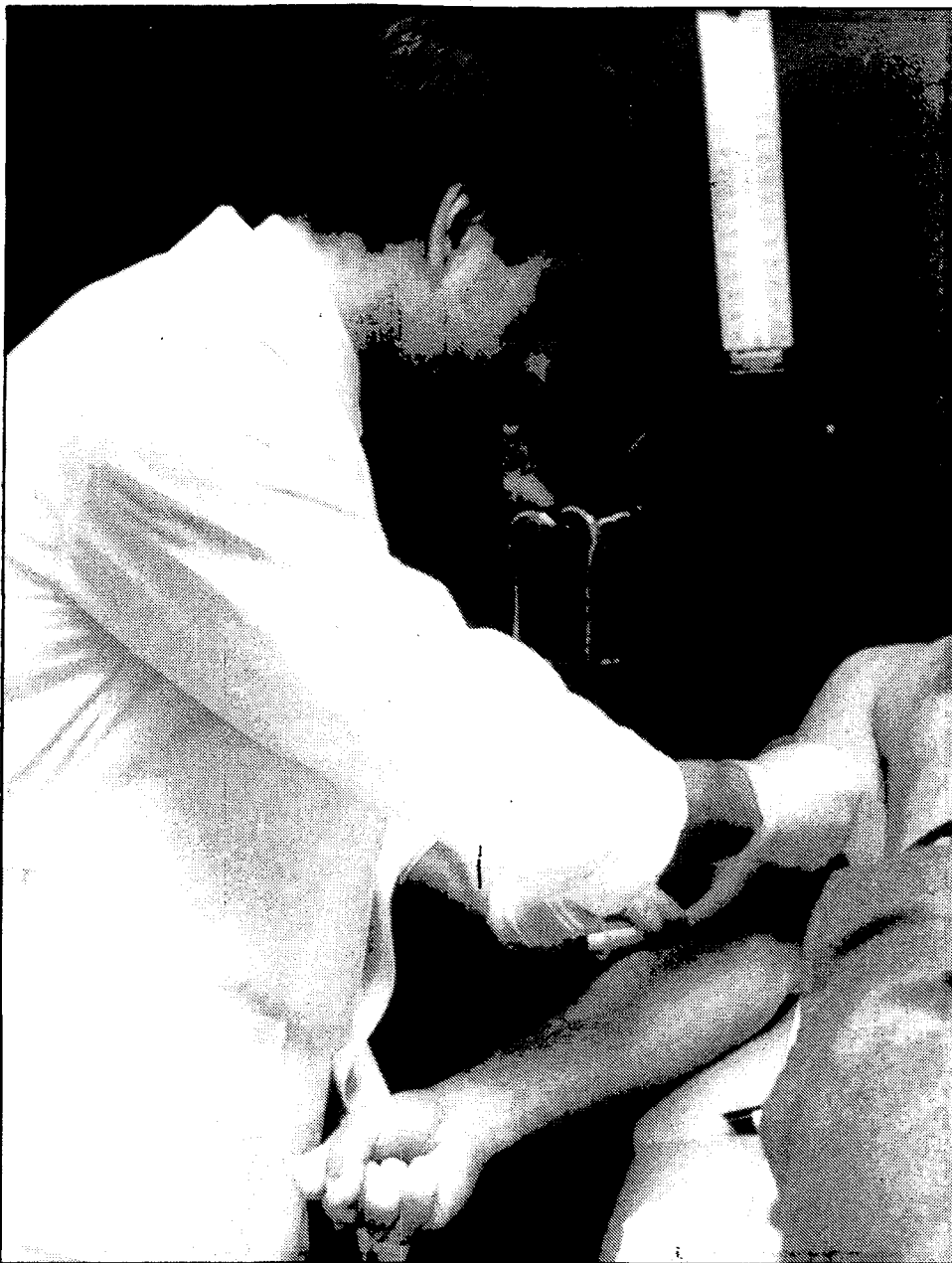
Underlying these charges is a question that doctors, prisoners' rights lawyers and prison officials cannot answer: do inmates with AIDS belong in an environment that hastens their death?

"Complications are diagnosed later; treatment is initiated too late and in inappropriate surroundings," says Dr. Robert Cohen, former medical director of Montefiore Medical Center/Rikers Island Health Services, who has observed medical care in prisons in seven states. This trend leads to both unnecessary suffering and early death, according to Cohen.

In New York a court decision disqualifies inmates who are HIV positive from having private trailer visits with their families. Inmates say this denies them close interaction with their families when they need it most.

"It's like a legal form of death sentence right now," says Robert Agoglia, an inmate at Green Haven Correctional Facility in Stormville, N.Y. "You're a criminal. You're sick. So what?"

Full-blown AIDS cases are reported to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) when a patient develops opportunistic infections such as pneumocystis carinii pneumonia, Kaposi's sarcoma (characterized by purplish



A New York City physician draws blood for an AIDS test.

Help is hard to come by for prisoners with AIDS

skin lesions) or an Alzheimer's-like dementia.

The National Institute of Justice, an arm of the U.S. Department of Justice, estimates that about 2,000 prisoners with full-blown AIDS have passed through the nation's prisons since 1981, when the CDC first classified AIDS as an epidemic. The rate increased about 60 percent in 1986 and again in 1987. In New York, the state and New York City prison systems host the largest concentration—50 percent—of AIDS inmates in the country. From 1981 through Oct. 31, 1988, 689 people died of AIDS complications while incarcerated in New York state.

Not a Caddy, a Chevy: The U.S. Supreme Court has said that inmates are entitled to what the community considers a "minimum standard" of medical care. Anything less would result in an unconstitutional "depraved indifference to human life." This means prisons, at the very least, must give inmates access to the same basic care available on the outside.

"It doesn't mean you have to provide Cadillac services," says Allan Goldberg, executive director of New York City's Prison Health Services. "You provide Chevrolet."

The New York State Commission of Correction's (COC) study of New York's prisons shows that in 1986, 28 inmates unknowingly died of AIDS complications. Statistics for the first 10 months of 1987 show 22 other prisoners also died in ignorance.

The commission also raised the concern that inmates, after diagnosis, lived about one-third as long as non-prisoners with AIDS.

Before June 1988 much of what was happening to prisoners with AIDS remained unseen behind prison walls until the Correctional Association, a private group with authority to inspect New York state's prisons, reported that inmates were unnecessarily segregated, and even isolated, with few opportunities for outside recreation or interaction with others. The group also found that medical facilities were understaffed and the psychological needs of prisoners were ignored.

At the same time, the COC reported that the Special Needs Unit at Sing Sing, the only facility in the state's system specifically set up for AIDS inmates, was understaffed and had no clear statement of purpose.

At the top of the COC's list of recommendations was converting the Sing Sing unit into a hospice that would accommodate the ups and downs of the disease.

Corrections Commissioner Thomas A. Coughlin III responded to the report: "DOCS' primary mission is not one of health care. As commissioner, I would resist any attempts to redefine our mission to include primary responsibility for health care. Our system is predicated on the use of community health services.

"AIDS is a devastating personal and

societal problem. Any attempt to replicate, in prison, services that should be provided in the community to treat this problem is, in my opinion, bad public policy," he said.

And, in line with "bad public policy," DOCS announced it would open two more 11-bed Special Needs Units at Fishkill and Wende Correctional Facility near Buffalo.

Missed diagnosis, missed treatment: Experts say most prison doctors are not trained to diagnose AIDS. And frequently there is only one doctor for as many as 2,000 inmates, forcing nurses or physician's assistants to make the initial diagnosis.

Dr. Charles Braslow, medical director of Montefiore Medical Center/Rikers Island Health Services, says that such ordinary symptoms as coughs, colds and fevers could mean tuberculosis, syphilis, herpes zoster or pneumonia—all AIDS-related. A simple headache could be toxoplasmosis, caused by a parasite that infects the brain, he added.

Prisoners receive only approved treatments, notably AZT, the only drug approved by the Food and Drug Administration for the treatment of full-blown AIDS or ARC (AIDS-related complex).

But inmate Agoglia, who has ARC, says he was denied AZT by a physician's aide, even though doctors at the Albany Medical Center prescribed it for him. The aide refused because he said Agoglia's T-helper cell blood count was not low enough. The count measures the immune system. Agoglia claims the same aide earlier refused his request for an antibody test to determine whether he had HIV infection.

HIV antibody testing: Only 13 states routinely test for HIV antibodies in prisons. In New York blood samples were taken as part of a one-time study, randomly and anonymously testing 500 prisoners entering the system in 1987. This gave health officials an idea of the prevalence of HIV in the state's prisons (currently estimated at 15 percent) in order to plan for future needs. HIV-infected prisoners were not identified.

Yet it is almost impossible to maintain prisoners' confidentiality. Guards transporting HIV-positive prisoners routinely "glove up," says John Gresham, associate director of Prisoners' Legal Services of New York, and inmates are made to carry their belongings in bright red bags when being moved.

Courts have consistently ruled that prisoners who test HIV positive may be separated. Yet when a special 50-bed dorm was set up at Greene Correctional Facility in Coxsackie, N.Y., for prisoners throughout the system with ARC or who were HIV positive, a federal district court judge quashed it in October 1988.

Justice Howard G. Munson ruled that inmates segregated without their informed consent were identified to other prisoners and their own families as having ARC or being HIV positive.

Munson ruled: "There are few matters of a more personal nature, and there are few decisions over which a person could have a greater desire to exercise control, than the manner in which he reveals that diagnosis to others."

But 21 inmates had already been transferred to the dorm, D-2. The harm was already done. "These guys were taken out of other medium-security prisons where they were doing fine in terms of confidentiality," says Gresham, the prisoners' attorney.

Gresham says he believed the dorm was

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By Daniel J. DeNoon

THE EQUATION HIV = AIDS = DEATH HAS BEEN repeated so often that it has become a vicious and self-fulfilling prophecy. It is also a killer. The surest way to acquire HIV infection, develop AIDS or die is to give up hope and to give in to denial or despair: in short, to become an AIDS victim.

"Believing that I could survive was probably the precondition necessary for my actual survival," wrote long-term AIDS survivor Michael Callen in a 1988 *Village Voice* article. "Unlike many other immune-deficient gay men, who considered themselves, in playwright Larry Kramer's famous phrase, 'ticking time bombs,' my AIDS world-view admitted from the first at least the theoretical possibility of recovery."

These are not just brave words. Experience gained over the years since AIDS burst into the national consciousness shows that people at risk of developing AIDS and people with AIDS can do much to maintain their health. This requires both hard work and courage. Making bravery especially difficult is the repetition of the seductive messages of denial ("I am not the type of person who gets HIV") and despair ("There is nothing I can do about it").

These messages keep us from learning the lessons that are being taught by the many people whose brave struggle against AIDS—a struggle to the death for more than a few—paves the way for many more people to survive.

Now is the time to reject the common assumption that HIV = AIDS = Death. Over the last two years many researchers have been publicly expressing their optimism that AIDS will become a manageable illness; indeed, many of the most severe AIDS-associated diseases are already preventable and treatable. The gay community, once predicted to be a constant source of AIDS transmission, has in the last few years effected what psychologists are calling the most remarkable voluntary behavior change ever recorded, bringing homosexual AIDS transmission to a virtual halt in some areas.

Why, then, all the grim pronouncements and dire predictions?

The new frontier: The way AIDS is understood, or misunderstood, is based on the peculiar evolution of the AIDS epidemic. In 1981 the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) in Atlanta received the first reports of an uncommon form of pneumonia (pneumocystis carinii pneumonia, or PCP) or an extremely rare form of skin cancer (Kaposi's sarcoma, or KS) in young patients with unexplained immune system collapse. These and other unusual or unusually virulent infections comprised a disease syndrome first called GRID (gay-related immune deficiency). Later, when it was found to be infectious and when heterosexual men and women also acquired the syndrome, it was changed to AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome).

By 1984 a new kind of virus (now called HIV, or human immunodeficiency virus) was isolated from AIDS patients' blood, and a test for antibodies to that virus was developed to identify those at risk of developing the syndrome. (While most AIDS researchers, particularly those who control funding, believe with dogmatic fervor that HIV causes AIDS, not everyone believes that the cause of AIDS has been identified. Not everyone with HIV infection has AIDS, and not

AIDS

The formula that HIV = AIDS = death kills hope and may not be true

everyone with AIDS has demonstrable HIV infection, yet the presence in the blood of antibodies to the virus is strongly associated with risk of developing AIDS.)

AIDS turned the medical world upside down. With measles and smallpox virtually eliminated, medicine was well on the way to curbing infectious diseases. The final frontiers of medicine appeared to be cancer and genetic disease. These hopes were shattered by the appearance of AIDS.

Also shattered was the conceit that the idea of disease as punishment and the consequent castigation of the afflicted were artifacts of less enlightened times. The ugly truth came as front-page news: panicked schools barring HIV-infected children, a mob burning the home of a family with AIDS, doctors refusing to treat sick patients, politicians calling for quarantine, and deep public sentiment for stigmatization of the "guilty" victims. One poll showed that 29 percent of Americans favored tattooing people exposed to HIV.

As Susan Sontag observes in her 1988

monograph *AIDS and Its Metaphors*, AIDS quickly surpassed cancer as the disease that symbolizes our deepest fears and prejudices.

"It seems that societies need to have one illness which becomes identified with evil, and attaches blame to its 'victims,' but it is hard to be obsessed with more than one," she writes. "For several generations now, the generic idea of death has been a death from cancer, and a cancer death is experienced as a generic defeat. Now the generic rebuke to life and to hope is AIDS."

Unlike cancer, which one either does or does not have and which proceeds by more or less clearly defined stages, "full-blown"

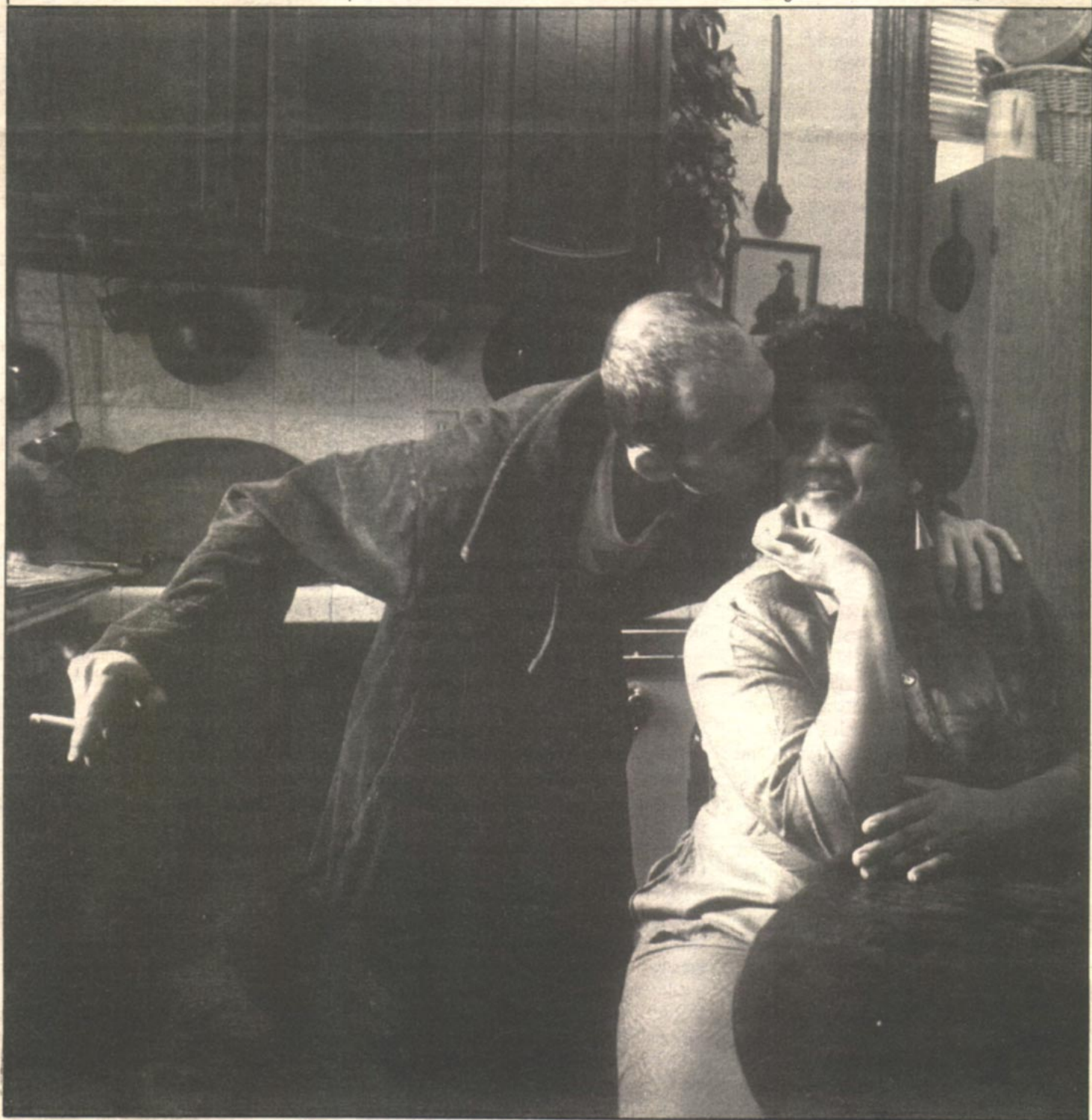
The AIDS epidemic has turned medicine on its head, shattering old myths and forcing new thinking.

AIDS, as a great many researchers refer to it, is a syndrome defined by the presence of a combination of constitutional symptoms and/or infectious diseases in a person with unexplained immune deficiency. This immune deficiency is, as noted above, thought to be caused by HIV—but the vast majority of those infected with HIV (in the U.S., an estimated 1.5 million people; worldwide, an estimated 5 million to 10 million people) do not have AIDS. Instead, these people are in a kind of medical limbo. They are told that they can expect to remain in limbo for an indefinite period until they develop a series of symptoms known as ARC (AIDS-related complex) and, finally, an AIDS-defining disease.

Most researchers endorse the opinion of Andrew Moss, an epidemiologist at the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF), who told a recent conference of biologists that people with HIV infection have begun "a pathological process that will give them AIDS in 10 years."

Continued on following page

The reward of love: a San Francisco area AIDS patient in an affectionate moment with a member of the Visiting Nurse Association's hospice unit.





© Tom Ferentz, 1988

A nurse with the San Francisco Visiting Nurse Association's hospice unit attending an AIDS patient at home.

Continued from preceding page

The period between the time a person acquires HIV infection and the time that person is diagnosed with AIDS has been referred to as the incubation period for AIDS. However, as more and more individuals survive the earlier guesses, official estimates of the length of this period have increased from three years to Moss' current estimate of 9.8 years for 50 percent of those infected.

"The contention that AIDS is invariably fatal depends partly on what doctors decided to define as AIDS—and keep in reserve as distinct earlier stages of the disease," Sontag argues. "And this decision rests on a notion no less primitively metaphorical than that of a 'full-blown' (or 'full-fledged') disease.... The doctors' botanical or zoological metaphor makes development or evolution into AIDS the norm, the rule."

Surviving AIDS: A growing number of physicians who regularly see patients with AIDS, ARC and asymptomatic HIV infection—especially those whose practices are not limited to hospitalized patients—have begun to question whether an HIV-positive person will inevitably develop AIDS.

"My guess is that the vast majority of people who currently have ARC can be prevented from ever developing AIDS," Bernard Bihari, a physician and researcher at Downstate Medical Center in Brooklyn, told a gay and lesbian community forum last year. "And of people who currently have AIDS, a significant number will survive and recover."

At first glance this statement seems wildly optimistic in light of AIDS statistics kept by the CDC. The cold facts are these: of the 90,000 U.S. residents with AIDS reported to the CDC since 1981, 52,000—57 percent—have died. Among the 38,228 people diagnosed with AIDS before 1987, the fatality rate is 80 percent.

In understanding these statistics and the important trends concealed within them, it is important to remember that AIDS does not develop overnight and that the CDC's technical definition of AIDS is the presence

of a severe opportunistic infection secondary to severe immune dysfunction that cannot be explained—except, of course, as the result of HIV infection. Because AIDS is a syndrome that takes time to develop, almost all of the people now diagnosed as having AIDS acquired HIV infection, as UCSF researcher Moss puts it, "before we knew anything about it."

Today researchers know a lot about it. They know that the most severe of the "opportunistic" infections associated with AIDS tend to appear when a person's immune system declines to a certain, measurable point. They know that exposure to a variety of infectious agents—including repeated exposure to HIV—can activate latent HIV infection. And they know that a healthy lifestyle and enlightened medical and psychological care can prolong health.

Today it is possible to prevent many of the severe opportunistic infections (most notably PCP). And the early diagnosis and treatment of these infections and of AIDS-associated cancers is also possible. The advent of the controversial drug AZT has, at least according to some physicians and people with AIDS and ARC, also contributed to survival.

Taken together, these factors have changed the face of the AIDS epidemic. The statistics don't lie, but they show only where the epidemic has been, not where it's going. To base current predictions about whether people will survive—especially people whose HIV infection has only recently been established—entirely upon the experience of the first years of the epidemic is not only misleading, but also harmful.

Nevertheless, the news that people with AIDS and ARC are surviving and that people with asymptomatic HIV infection are maintaining their health is, while heartening, not a call for complacency. To ignore the facts that AIDS is here, that it is a killer and that the epidemic is growing is to participate in the denial upon which the spread of the epidemic depends.

A story CDC AIDS Program Director James

Curran likes to tell illustrates this point. Curran was flying to an AIDS conference and was working on his presentation when a young woman in the seat next to him, seeing his materials, began a discussion about AIDS. "What are my chances of getting AIDS?" she asked conversationally. Curran explained that he could give her a very good idea of her risk is she would answer a few very personal questions. "Never mind," she said. "I don't think it's a problem for me."

Although AIDS is, tragically, spreading most rapidly among inner-city blacks and Hispanics (see story on page 9), HIV infection is not limited to any easily identifiable group of people. But like the young woman in Curran's story, most people cope with AIDS by denying their own risk, believing that it is something that happens to somebody else, particularly somebody who is a gay male or a black junkie. Yet these stereotypes do not hold up.

For example, a New York infectious disease specialist recently examined the records of his Staten Island practice and identified 35 women and four men who had heterosexual relations with persons who had HIV infection. Each of these individuals had different sexual partners. These middle-class individuals had an average age of 35 years, an average household income of \$41,200, an average of two lifetime sexual partners and a long-term relationship—averaging six years—with the person who exposed them

Doctors who see the range of cases are no longer so sure that being HIV positive means that AIDS, let alone death, is an inevitability.

to HIV.

All of the men and 31 of the women were white, 34 of the 39 individuals lived in private residences and one had a history of intravenous drug abuse. Nine of these people were unaware of their partner's risk of HIV infection (in these cases, intravenous drug use), and five others found out long after beginning sexual relations with their partner; 16 said they didn't know that HIV could be transmitted by heterosexual sex until after their partner tested positive for HIV antibodies.

Few of these individuals used condoms, and those who did used them only rarely. None of these 39 people fit any of the stereotypes. Eleven of them tested positive for HIV.

Another dangerous manifestation of denial is the refusal of many individuals whose behavior has put them at risk of acquiring HIV infection to come to terms with the possibility that they may develop AIDS. Among gay men, this has been referred to as "the second closet" by Martin Delaney, co-director of Project Inform in San Francisco. Simply put, the first and best step toward surviving the AIDS epidemic is voluntary, confidential, carefully planned HIV testing for people who may have been exposed to HIV.

As recently as two years ago there were as many reasons not to be tested for HIV infection as reasons to be tested. At that time medicine did not have much to offer the HIV-positive individual. Until recently, a widely repeated joke among health-care workers was that when a person tested negative for HIV, the doctor would shake his or her hand and say, "Good luck, and remember to have safe sex." When a person tested positive for HIV, however, the physician would put on a rubber glove, shake hands and say, "Good luck, and remember to have safe sex."

Times have changed: It remains true that the social consequences of HIV testing are potentially devastating—people publicly identified as HIV positive have suffered all kinds of discrimination. And a positive test

can be psychologically devastating as well.

The risks of voluntary testing must nevertheless be weighed against the benefits of early diagnosis. Testing itself doesn't offer protection. Neither does denial. But early medical and psychological intervention can.

Therefore, HIV testing, when properly prepared for, is the first step on the path to survival for everyone who has at one time or another risked exposure to the virus. This is especially important for gay men, for intravenous drug users and for the sexual partners of IV drug users because of the prevalence of HIV infection among these populations.

"If you take the test, you can get results on a day you choose, at a time you have lined up the appropriate support and have obtained any needed information when you still have the best possible medical options in front of you," Delaney wrote in a recent issue of *The Advocate*, the national gay news-magazine. "If you learn by waiting for an opportunistic infection, you're likely to get the news by surprise, at a time when you least expect it, when you are unprepared to hear it and when your future medical options may have already been diminished."

The "appropriate support" to which Delaney refers should include both peer support and psychological counseling.

The isolation of facing a potentially fatal condition is compounded in the case of AIDS by society's fears and prejudices. Support is thus especially important for people with HIV infection, ARC and AIDS. In the best of circumstances, friends and family would form an integral part of such a support group. Whether or not this type of assistance is available, a person who finds that he or she must come to terms with a positive HIV test will enormously benefit from participation in an organized group of individuals in the same situation. Fortunately, AIDS organizations in most areas of the U.S. have either formed such groups or can refer people to them.

Psychological counseling, either in an individual or group setting, can be an important factor in survival. A qualified psychologist or counselor can be of enormous assistance in recognizing and overcoming the life-sapping effects of denial and despair. A psychologist can also help recognize the early signs of mental dysfunction that can sometimes be the first symptoms of AIDS. Several causes of this so-called "AIDS dementia" can, with early diagnosis and medical intervention, be treated.

By helping people confront and work through issues blocking their ability to function fully, psychological counseling enhances not only one's ability to think and feel, but also one's physical well-being.

An exciting new field of research, psychoimmunology, has found that psychological status directly influences immune function. In AIDS, a syndrome arising from immune dysfunction, these findings have a direct bearing on survival.

Lydia Temoshok, a clinical and social psychologist at Langley Porter Psychiatric Institute in San Francisco, has reported strong evidence that psychosocial factors exert an important effect on immunologic changes in AIDS. In a 1987 experiment she conducted with psychoimmunology founder George F. Solomon and others, Temoshok gave a battery of psychosocial and immunologic tests to 18 men with AIDS. They found that several psychosocial traits appeared to predict adaptive immune function.

These were current involvement in a physical fitness program, generally taking care of oneself in terms of health, and less tension and anxiety.

In another study, Temoshok and colleagues compared the self-report psychological measures obtained two to eight weeks after the diagnosis of PCP from 10 men with AIDS who subsequently died and from 11 men who had survived. Survival was significantly associated with avoiding a "helpless/hopeless" attitude.

Coping with AIDS: The very small number of subjects in these studies, as well as their preliminary nature, makes it impossible to draw firm conclusions. However, from these and other pilot studies and from interviews with long-term AIDS survivors, Solomon, Temoshok and colleagues hypothesize that the following traits are associated with AIDS survival:

- collaborating with one's physician and not interacting in either a passive/compliant or defiant mode;

- having a sense of personal responsibility for one's health, including a sense that one is not helpless;

- having a commitment to life in terms of unfinished business, unmet goals or as-yet-unfulfilled experiences;

- having a sense of meaningfulness and purpose in life;

- finding new meaning in life as a result of HIV infection or AIDS;

- engaging in a physical fitness program to the extent that one is able;

- having the ability to be assertive and to say no;

- having the ability to withdraw from taxing situations and to nurture oneself;

- being sensitive to one's physical and psychological needs; and

- being able to communicate openly about one's concerns, especially one's illness.

The worst thing is to chase after faddish treatments. Still, it's useful to stay aware of the risks and benefits of new drugs and fresh approaches to AIDS.

In their interviews with AIDS survivors, the psychoimmunologists found three prevailing attitudes: acceptance of the reality of their diagnosis coupled with a refusal to see it as a death sentence, a personalized means of active coping with their diagnosis, and an altered lifestyle to accommodate their disease.

Temoshok says that if she were to find out tomorrow that she were HIV positive, she would take a long, hard look at her life.

"I would carefully assess my life situation and see if my life is meaningful to me," she asserts. "Perhaps this would mean doing more things for others or for myself. I'd ask myself some questions: 'Is my job causing me satisfaction? Are the people around me causing me satisfaction?' Then I would choose a physician I could work with actively, one who would tell me of important treatment options. I would look at things that would help me stay psychologically and physically well, perhaps look at biofeedback, for example—things that are powerful but not necessarily proven."

Physicians who treat AIDS patients are saying the same thing.

"The treatment of AIDS sits on a tripod," New York Hospital/Cornell Medical Center clinician Ronald Grossman said last November at a Columbia University public forum. "Leg number one is that you've got to have a doctor/patient relationship and be in the medical system. Leg number two of the tripod is how you take care of yourself, and everyone in this audience knows what that means: how you eat, how you rest, cleaning up your act from all of the bad habits that we all had. Tripod leg number three is what is often referred to as spirituality, positive thinking."

As both Temoshok and Grossman stress, the doctor/patient relationship is crucial to health maintenance. Being in the medical system, as Grossman puts it, allows a person to monitor his or her immune status and to make informed decisions about interventions such as when to begin taking medication to prevent PCP and when—or whether—to take AZT.

This medication, which is the subject of a vehement medical debate, is associated with a number of very serious toxicities. Most physicians believe that the benefits outweigh the risks—and they have many patients who are doing well on the drug. Yet other physicians believe that the benefits are much less tangible—and they have many patients who are doing well without the drug. AZT is currently approved for use in patients whose immune parameters suggest that they are on the verge of developing AIDS. A huge clinical test is now being conducted to determine whether the drug can be helpful if administered to people with asymptomatic HIV infection.

Whether or not to take this drug depends on a person's particular situation; it is a decision in which one should be able to participate. Obviously, such participation requires an active partnership with one's doctor.

Exploring options: Although AZT is the only drug officially approved for the treatment of AIDS, other medications available either in the U.S. or in other countries have a potential, but unproven, value. Probably the worst thing to do is to participate in every faddish treatment that comes along—and in the case of AIDS, every month brings a new fad. But it is imperative that one be able to discuss the risks and benefits of experimental drugs with one's physician, and one should be willing at least to consider using innovative treatments or entering clinical trials of experimental drugs that seem appropriate.

As mentioned above, it is now possible to prevent PCP from developing in the great majority of AIDS and ARC cases by the aerosol administration of a drug called pentamidine. To date this has been the single greatest breakthrough in AIDS patient management, as about 60 percent of AIDS deaths have been attributable to PCP infection. However, treatment is expensive and should be undertaken only when a person's immune status reaches a certain critical stage. Currently this is thought to be when a patient's T-cell count drops to less than 200 cells per cubic millimeter. Recent research indicates that an even better indication of when to begin PCP prophylaxis is when a person has two of three indicators: a T-cell count less than 200, the presence in the blood of an HIV antigen called p24 and high levels of a blood factor known as beta-2 microglobulin.

When appropriate, various antibiotic medications can be used to prevent the

onset of other opportunistic infections. However, drug sensitivities must be taken into account. A long-lasting sulfa drug known as Fansidar is particularly dangerous to sensitive individuals; its use should be closely monitored.

The decision to take prophylactic medication must be made by the patient and the physician working as partners. Both must make efforts to keep informed about current treatments, and open discussions and exchanges of information are a crucial part of therapy. If a physician is unable or unwilling to form such a partnership, he or she is probably the wrong person for the job.

The second leg of the tripod supporting survival is taking care of oneself. This should include continuing or beginning a regular program of exercise, but not to the point of exhaustion: taking care of oneself also means recognizing one's limits, especially for the person with ARC or AIDS. "Don't overdo it," is the basic admonishment for work as well as for play.

Diet is also extremely important. AIDS is a disease of the immune system, and while the immune system is perhaps the most poorly understood aspect of human metabolism, one thing that is known is that a good diet is crucial to proper immune function.

Sudhir Gupta, a clinical immunologist at the University of California, Irvine, and an AIDS practitioner, strongly emphasizes a fat-free diet supplemented with vitamins and trace elements zinc and selenium.

"People tend to neglect how important nutrition is for the immune system," Gupta says. "I tell my patients to cut down on fats—they are always wanting to eat fast food—and to eat less red meat, shrimp and lobster. Fat increases cancer risk and is associated with poor immune response."

Donald Kotler, of St. Luke's Medical Center in New York, makes similar suggestions.

"AIDS patients seem to do better on a relatively lactose-restricted and low-fat diet, as long as there is a sufficient amount of protein.... I make sure that there's a supplement of protein," he told the Columbia forum. "I often tell people to find a good multivitamin with mineral preparation, I don't care what kind it is, and to take three of them, not 20, but three, maxidose rather than megadose."

Last, but by no means least important to surviving AIDS, is one's mental and spiritual attitude.

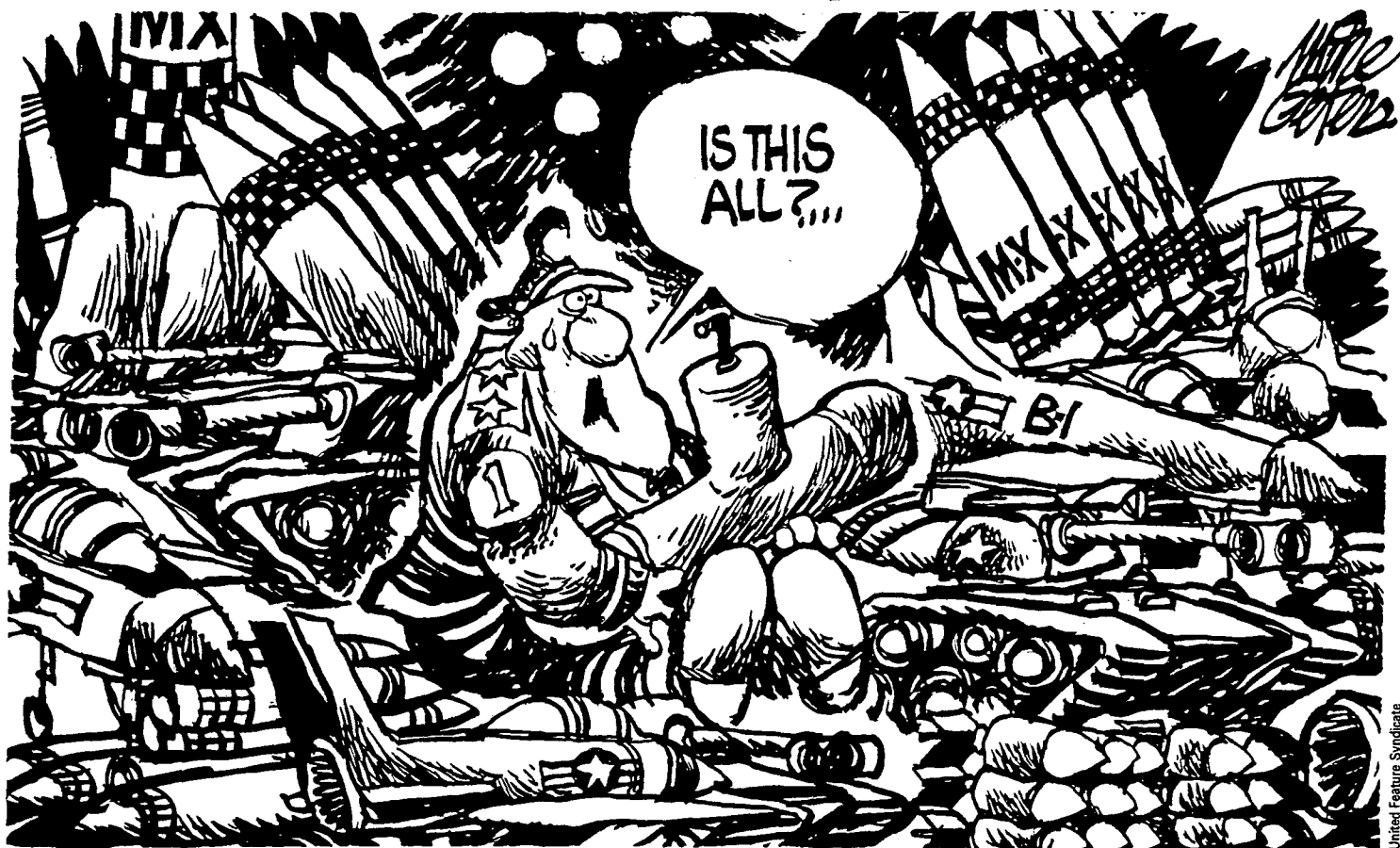
True grit: Michael Callen has tracked down and interviewed more than 20 long-term survivors, all of whom have had AIDS for at least three years.

"If I had to describe in one word the common characteristic of the long-term survivors I interviewed, it would be grit," he wrote in his *Voice* article. "These people were all fighters. Opinionated, incredibly knowledgeable about AIDS, stubborn and passionately committed to living, these men and women were working hard to stay alive."

People surviving this epidemic don't have an antidote for AIDS. What they do have are the antidotes to denial and despair—the determination to be responsible for their own lives and the courage to hope. Current medical opinion confirms the validity of their struggle. □

Daniel J. DeNoon is an Atlanta-based freelance writer and research editor of *CDC AIDS Weekly*, a private newsletter not affiliated with the Centers for Disease Control. He has been following the AIDS epidemic since 1985.

EDITORIAL



American public leads the way to new politics

A growing majority of Americans see the Cold War as an anachronism. Whatever most Americans may once have thought, they now consider the threat of Communism and Soviet military power to be the least of their foreign policy and security concerns. But this truth, the logic of which *In These Times* has argued consistently for the past decade, still escapes not only the ideologues of the Republican Party and the Democratic Leadership Council, but also pragmatic political consultants like those who ran Walter Mondale's and Michael Dukakis' presidential campaigns. Like the candidates they advise, these savants remain shackled by ideology and survey results of their own making. Creatures of Cold War liberalism, they are blind to the international realities of the '80s and to the meaning of two decades of change in Europe, Japan, the Communist countries and the Third World.

Not so for the American people. While smug political consultants advise aspiring Democrats to mimic Republicans on foreign and military policy, the public looks at the world and moves in the opposite direction.

Cold shoulder to the Cold War: This truth has been reflected in numerous recent polls indicating that public support for the Reagan years' military buildup has been eroding. And now an in-depth study by the Roosevelt Center for American Policy Studies, a non-partisan public-policy organization, confirms that a large majority of Americans desire a new set of priorities to guide public policies. The study involved more than 900 participants in forums held in 12 communities across the country. Chosen from all walks of life and from political and ideological positions corresponding closely to national averages, each assembly was representative of the community in which it was held.

Participants in the forums were asked three primary questions: What threats to national security are of greatest concern? How much money should we devote to defense spending? Given the increased risks defense cuts might pose, which specific programs, if any, should be cut, and which increased?

The most striking result was that the threats of Communist aggression in Asia, Soviet aggression in Europe and the general spread of Communism were considered to be minor or negligible by large majorities. In the list of threats considered by the participants, these three came in dead last. On the other hand, nuclear and chemical proliferation, deterioration of the global environment and domestic social concerns led the list. The proliferation of deadly weapons was a top or important concern of 86 percent of the participants, the environment was a first or second concern of 81 percent of forum members, and social needs of 77 percent.

These would be startling results if one took the pronouncements of leading political consultants seriously. But the pundits are not

stupid in the ordinary sense of the word. They continue to recite received wisdom because they are by nature cautious, conservative and beholden to the elites they serve. The public has passively accepted much of this "wisdom" in the face of longtime barrages of stories about the menace posed by the Soviet Union to Europe and the Mideast and by Soviet "client states" to the Third World. A time lag for the underlying reality to become clear was only natural, especially in the absence of political leaders or popular media to challenge the Cold War shibboleths.

New values: But despite the propaganda to which it is constantly subjected, the public has emerged with a set of spending priorities that conforms more closely to real social needs than do those of their political "leaders" and "opinion makers." A majority, questioning the sanctity of the "strategic triad" of land-, air- and sea-based nuclear weapons, opposes further modernization of land-based ICBMs and wants to eliminate the B-2 (Stealth) bomber and the Midgetman ICBM. Only 2 percent support administration plans to modernize all three legs of the triad, while 71 percent would stop all work on the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) except research. Only 9 percent support the Reagan plan to test and deploy SDI.

Participants also believe that American commitments and troops in Europe and the Far East should be cut. Forty-four percent would bring home and decommission 20,000 of the 300,000 U.S. troops in Europe, while 40 percent would cut U.S. forces there by a full third. Similarly, 61 percent endorsed a plan to require Japan to assume the cost of defending its own air and sea routes and to share the costs of defending the Philippines. And a majority would withdraw all American land forces from Korea.

Yet, even though 69 percent of forum participants consider "Third-World poverty and repression" as a top or high priority threat, they are not entirely immune to prevailing neocolonial ideology. Almost half (48 percent) see "low-intensity conflicts" as problems originating in the Third World and support efforts to combat terrorism, guerrilla warfare and sabotage.

When the costs of the various programs that participants would cut or add to current military budget levels are added up, the net result would be cuts of \$111 billion over the next five years. This is a modest reduction in military spending—about \$22 billion a year, or a bit more than 10 percent. Yet considering that the proposed cuts were chosen in the absence of a rigorous public challenge to the official ideology purveyed day and night in the media and by public officials, they are highly significant.

For the left, and for the Democratic Party as a whole, the message should be clear. The problem is not that Democrats are seen as soft on defense—the public is even softer. The problem is that the party is seen as weak, without its own identity, unwilling to give leadership to the nation in a bold and committed manner. A party that took these results seriously and began to act on them by proposing a fundamentally new set of spending priorities could only increase the majorities against present policies. In the process they would also begin truly to defend our nation.

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LETTERS

Depredation

CORPORATE GREED HAS JUST DESTROYED PRINCE William Sound here in Alaska.

I was born in Alaska, and during my 67 years I raised three children, two boys and a girl.

I had a sailboat, and I used to take them into Prince William Sound in the summer. A pod of killer whales would swim close by, and a grey whale would breach in the distance. I would anchor in one of the countless coves, and my children would dive off the boat into the clear water—so clear that you could see the ocean floor 30 feet below. They would take our dinghy and row ashore and wash themselves under the cold clear waterfalls that tumbled into the sea.

And during the long summer evenings, we would build a fire on the beach and have a salmon or halibut baking under the fire, along with a pot of steamer clams that the children had gathered nearby. Sometimes my son would dive down in his scuba gear and bring up a Dungeness or king crab for the evening meal. Sometimes we would put out a small pot to catch some shrimp. And then after supper the children would sit around the fire, commenting on the things they had seen that day in the tidal pools around them. Then we would bring out the guitar and sing some songs. And as the longer summer evening drew to a close, we would grow quiet, listening to a gull calling or a loon crying in the distance.

All of that is now gone. For hundreds of square miles Prince William Sound is now covered with a black thick oil. Everything is dead—birds, clams, fish, sea animals—all, in the thousands—dead.

The sound will not come back for decades. Small fishing villages have been destroyed. The tourist industry in the sound has been wiped out.

This tanker spill was not caused just by a drunk sea captain. This corporate violence to our Alaskan environment was caused by greed and by corporate structures that are too large, bureaucratic and authoritarian.

With their unlimited funds, they gained control of our state legislature, which cut the funds we needed to establish a strong environmental protection agency.

The Alyeska Pipeline Corp. is owned by a consortium of oil companies, the largest of which are Exxon, British Petroleum and Atlantic Richfield. This pipeline, pumping more than 2 million barrels a day, supplies approximately 25 percent of all U.S. domestic oil. The pipeline corporation assured us that they had adequate equipment to handle an oil spill of any size, which was not true. Whenever we questioned them about this, they overwhelmed us with their "expertise." Only they understood the problem, and their experts knew what to do. We now know this was not true.

We now know that Prince William Sound was targeted for disaster for some of the following reasons:

1. We wanted the pipeline to be built to go through Canada. This was resisted by the oil companies as being too expensive.
2. We wanted only smaller tankers to be allowed in the sound. This idea was abandoned.
3. We wanted only double-hulled tankers to be used. This was not done.
4. We wanted the "coast pilot," who guides

the ship into port, to extend his control of the ship from the terminal at Valdez all the way through the sound before turning control of the ship to the captain. This was not done.

So, as I write to you now, a large oil slick is floating out of Prince William Sound and into the north Pacific, encircling the island seabird rookeries located along the coast of the Kenai Peninsula and drifting toward Cook inlet and Kodiak Island. When the southern winds start, in the next few days, to carry the oil into shore, God only knows what is going to happen.

I have been a socialist all my life. I have been a sustainer of *In These Times* since it first got started. I had hoped through the years that a consensus could be reached over what could be done to stop and control this capitalistic system before it destroys us. The Earth cannot stand the havoc that is being wreaked upon it much longer.

Hal Johnston
Anchorage, Alaska

Mother load

NANLOUISE WOLFE AND STEPHEN ZUNES (*ITT*, March 29) say, "In a just society there would be no contradiction between family and career."

Although at first sight this assertion appears to have merit, the authors ignore a primary issue for women who opt for careers, especially in the professions and arts. Regardless of which kind of society a woman lives in, if she has more than a few children she will be severely hampered in both mothering and pursuing her career.

All of the maternity leaves and child care centers in the world will not lessen a woman's primary responsibility to her children, which is an ongoing commitment that covers a sizable time span. In juggling between her job-related duties and her parenting, the mother succeeds only in raising the anxiety level of her children and herself. My friend's physician daughter who is raising only two children in Sweden, where all kinds of support systems exist, had to put off her residency for several years because of her responsibility to her children. If Mireille had opted to have more than two children, she believes that she never would have completed her training. She faced the reality of mothering her children and decided on having only two.

Rather than deflect this reality that all women face, that they must limit their reproduction in favor of other options, the authors would have served their readers more honestly had they stated that women can't have everything, even in the land of milk and honey.

Another omission was any reference to

world overpopulation, a problem that has put severe strains on world food resources. If the authors' focus had been on the need for real family planning instead of their wished-for change from a competitive to a collaborative society (a great idea, but not to propagate a population explosion!), their article would have better served your readers.

Barbara Winder
Amherst, Mass.

Megamanipulation

PAT AUFDERHEIDE'S REPORT ON THE MERGER OF Time Inc. and Warner Communications (*ITT*, March 29) was interesting. But I'm surprised no mention was made of General Electric's ownership and use of NBC.

GE can now air, and has aired, hour-long attitude-shaping shows dressed as documentary. Check out those ultrahigh-budget GE PR spots on NBC's public affairs programs (e.g., local and national news and shows like *The McLaughlin Group*).

Here's a specific: NBC's 1987 "news documentary" *Nuclear Power: In France It Works*. Few people who watched that show considered it a pro-nuclear advertisement dressed as news documentary. That people seemed to accept NBC's "documentary" as objective was part of the artfulness of the thing: scenes of blue-haired French matrons touring sparkling nuclear plants were intercut with shaggy Americans being dragged from power plant construction sites. And that the French are making money selling electric power generated from American uranium ore was stated by the narrator while the visuals showed a multibillion-dollar abandoned and decaying American nuclear power plant.

Now why would GE/NBC run a pro-nuclear show? Well, General Electric has a big interest in nuclear power. General Electric has bought itself a network with which to hawk its wares and shape public opinion. Within the next few decades companies other than GE and Time will realize the full power of our planetary-scale communications networks. Consortia of special interests will be able to shape and manage public attitudes and opinion in unprecedented ways.

Speaking and writing are historically the two aspects of language. Of the two, written language has long been the verifier, the reality maker in Western society. If something's in writing, that alone makes it true.

But literacy is being displaced by television as the ultimate verifier and sanctifier of information. Television has taken for itself the sacred power formerly belonging to the written aspect of language.

Ronald Reagan's presidency showed that the chief executive has become chief Tele-Prompter reader. The bureaucracy runs it-

self, but it needs a voice, a script reader, an avuncular figure (or whatever figure best fits the public's expectations) to read, on television—and thereby to sanctify by virtue of television broadcast—the results of bureaucratic consensus.

In the not too distant future, the controllers of television networks will be able to manage public opinion through the subtle manipulation of everything from news documentaries to sitcoms, game shows and news—news that might well be totally computer fabricated and indistinguishable from real events shot by a single camera in a single setting: wars that do not exist, street riots that do not exist, leaders that do not exist.

Robert Burruss
Kensington, Md.

Inflation credit

SM. MILLER'S MARCH 15 ARTICLE SAID THAT REAGAN should get credit for lowering inflation. No way. The credit goes to the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC).

During the Carter presidency OPEC fueled inflation with monstrous price rises for oil, affecting all petrochemical, transportation and energy prices. OPEC halted its destabilization of our economy when a Republican resumed occupancy in the White House. What's good for OPEC is good for oil companies, and Reagan surely scuttled any Carter policies that inconvenienced them. OPEC and its crude friends increased their profits by hurting Carter, and then stopped the inflation squeeze when Reagan's crew took over the executive branch.

How soon we forget.

Richard L. Miller
Kansas City, Mo.

Boycott Exxon

IN REACTION TO EXXON'S ROLE IN THE RECENT OIL spill, I decided to return my credit cards and to boycott its products. Following is my letter to the company president:

President
Exxon Company, USA
P.O. Box 1322
Houston, Texas 77251

Dear Sir:

I had been looking forward to receiving my Exxon credit card, but after the shameful way your company acted in the recent oil spill, I can no longer accept it. It has become clear that your company was not ready for a spill of this size and has cut back on vital emergency plans. This total disregard for our common heritage is poor citizenship and threatens many other species, which in turn threatens the fragile ecosystem itself.

Daniel N. Graham
Chapel Hill, N.C.

SYLVIA

by Nicole Hollander



Adam Michnik sees Solidarity as key to Poland's democratic evolution

By Alicja Mann

ON APRIL 5, THE LONG AND DIFFICULT negotiations between the Polish government and the opposition led by Solidarity reached a historical moment with the signing of accords.

Among the participants who got up from the negotiation table were two who years ago had encountered each other under dramatically different circumstances—Gen. Czeslaw Kiszczak, the interior minister, and Adam Michnik, historian, writer, Solidarity adviser and political activist.

In 1983, while in prison, Michnik wrote a letter to Gen. Kiszczak in response to an offer of freedom in exchange for leaving Poland.

I know very well, General, why you need our departure.... So you can say to Polish people: look, even they gave up, even they lost faith in a democratic and free Poland. So that, above all else, you can improve your own image in your own eyes....

Well, I am going to deny you that pleasure. I cannot foretell the future, and I have no idea whether I will yet live to see the victory of truth over lies and of Solidarity over this present anti-worker dictatorship. The point is, General, that for me, the value of our struggle lies not in chances of victory but rather in the value of the cause....

Several difficult years of that struggle passed. Today, the result of the round-table negotiations in Poland is a victory of hope over despair.

I felt that despair strongly during a visit to Poland last September. The continued deterioration of Poland's economy was painfully visible, even in comparison to my visit three years earlier—bare shelves in the meat shops, restaurants closed or half empty, train tracks in need of repair.

Tiredness and resignation were visible in

people's eyes. Even the proposal for round-table talks between the government, the Catholic Church and the opposition led by the members of the outlawed Solidarity trade union did not raise high expectations at that time. (The talks had been proposed, but were delayed several times and finally started in February.)

One had to wonder—where was the hope?

To find it I sought out Adam Michnik.

Evolution of a dissident: The son of a Jewish Communist official, Michnik has been politically active since he was 15. There is a twist of irony in the father's and son's political activities. Michnik's father

Changes in the Soviet Union influence what is happening in Poland, and what is happening in Poland influences the Soviet Union, Michnik says. He sees Solidarity's emergence as a major cause of glasnost.

was jailed in prewar Poland for being a Communist. The son's political convictions evolved from believing in communism, through doubting and questioning, to rejection of it. Adam was jailed for anti-Communist activities. The father, however, stood by his son and joined a hunger strike in an appeal for the release of Adam and others from prison.

Adam Michnik is best known today for his theories and advocacy of non-violent political activism. His calls for dialogue between intellectuals, workers and the church have been imprinted on the Polish Solidarity movement and were responsible for much of its success.

We met late one evening in his Warsaw apartment, which used to belong to his

father and now is shared by Adam, his wife Barbara and their little son Antoni. Michnik was friendly and hospitable and spoke with a sharp, biting humor.

With the proposal for round-table talks being highly publicized, I asked Michnik about the various radical political groups that did not believe in negotiating with the Communist government and criticized the moderates in Solidarity for such attempts.

He responded sarcastically, "What kind of value have all those radical statements?"

"A small group of very respectable people would like to break Communism. Very good idea," he said. "Very good idea, indeed, but the problem remains, how to do it? What kind of program do they have?"

He became animated while talking about the significance of the Solidarity movement. Michnik pointed out that after the revolution in Hungary, nothing happened for 20 years as far as an opposition is concerned, and after Prague Spring not much happened in Czechoslovakia either. "But what happened after Solidarity?" he asked and answered, "Martial law, people in jails, full underground movement, underground press, many new organizations, and...a slow liberalization process." Then he added, "This liberalization process is forced by social pressure and by the pressure from abroad."

What hopes or expectations did he have regarding the proposed round-table talks?

"Let's start from the fact that most recently, Mieczyslaw Rakowski became prime minister," responded Michnik. (Rakowski, a former editor of the weekly *Polityka*, was more recently known for his hard-line position toward Solidarity.) "Now the question is which will win out within Mr. Rakowski—the megalomania that is the sister of courage, or the megalomania that is the sister of stupidity. Because the two types of megalomania are fighting within him." Michnik drew on his cigarette and continued, "If the first type wins, then he will come to some agreement with Walesa. This is quite possible, and I give it a 10-percent chance."

"A strong 10 percent," he stressed. "If the second type of megalomania wins, which is more possible, we will have a new and much deeper crisis in Poland. This is really the last whistle." Then he added, "But Mr. Rakowski understands it, and we count on that."

Whatever the chances, Michnik was not pessimistic and believed that such negotiations should take place. "I dislike pessimism. It is so easy to be a pessimist, because you can always be right. You do not have to do anything. Pessimism, some forms of it at least, excuses passivity. I am afraid of such a position and always suspect that behind it is hidden some rationalization of one's fear, conformism or laziness."

Gauging the Gorby factor: I was anxious to hear how Michnik saw the changes in the Soviet Union and what he thought of Mikhail Gorbachov as a leader.

"Everybody is interested these days in how honest, how sincere Gorbachov is," smiled Michnik. "While such a question

might be important for his wife or for the psychoanalysts, it is not important for me. What I see as important is the fact that if Gorbachov intended or not, he became a liberator of some social, intellectual and cultural processes in the Soviet Union." Michnik became very serious. "These processes are of great historical importance. We are witnessing the awakening of cultural and ethnic awareness in different republics of the Soviet Union. Independent of Gorbachov's intentions, the process of reviving human rights has started—rights to cultural identity, religion or national language."

And what about the Gorbachov reforms—is their purpose to save communism?

"If it is about communism, I do not know, because I do not know what communism is anymore. I do know, however, what the Soviet empire is. With that there is no problem; it can be defined easily." Then he continued, "What Gorbachov wants is to modernize and save the Soviet empire. He is very aware that without modernization the Soviet empire will lose its significance, just as happened to the Spanish and Turkish empires in the past."

How will all of this influence Poland's fate?

"The changes in the Soviet Union influence what is happening in Poland, and what is happening in Poland influences the Soviet Union." He gave an example of the latter. "Just before Gorbachov's visit to Poland, I saw a television program where Russian citizens on the streets of Moscow were asked randomly what they thought about Poland."

"And do you know what they answered? Several of them said that *glasnost* and *perestroika* really started in Poland. This means that what happens in our country is not without importance."

Then came the question of reinstating the legal status of Solidarity. There were voices among some officials in Warsaw at that time suggesting that legalization might be acceptable, but under a different name. What did he think of it?

Michnik jumped from his seat. "What do I think of it? That is nonsense, absurd!" Then he continued, to my delight, "If words do not have any meaning, then the words of our Dabrowski's Mazurka [the Polish national anthem]—'Poland has not died as long as we live'—could be changed to 'Volga, Volga, mat radnaia' [a Russian song about the Volga River—'Volga, Volga, our mother']."

This sounded so ridiculous and funny that we laughed long and hard.

Several months have passed since that conversation. Today Solidarity is legal again. Poland has made its first step toward democracy.

In 1981 Michnik stated in one of his political essays: "The Bastille can be assaulted by an amorphous mob armed only with emotions and courage; a long-term policy of democratic evolution can only be conducted by a movement that is well organized, that is aware of its goal and that acts in solidarity."

Poland has it with a capital "S."

Alicja Mann recently spent two months in Poland and Czechoslovakia. She was an op-ed columnist for the *Cape Cod Times* and has written for the *New Leader*.

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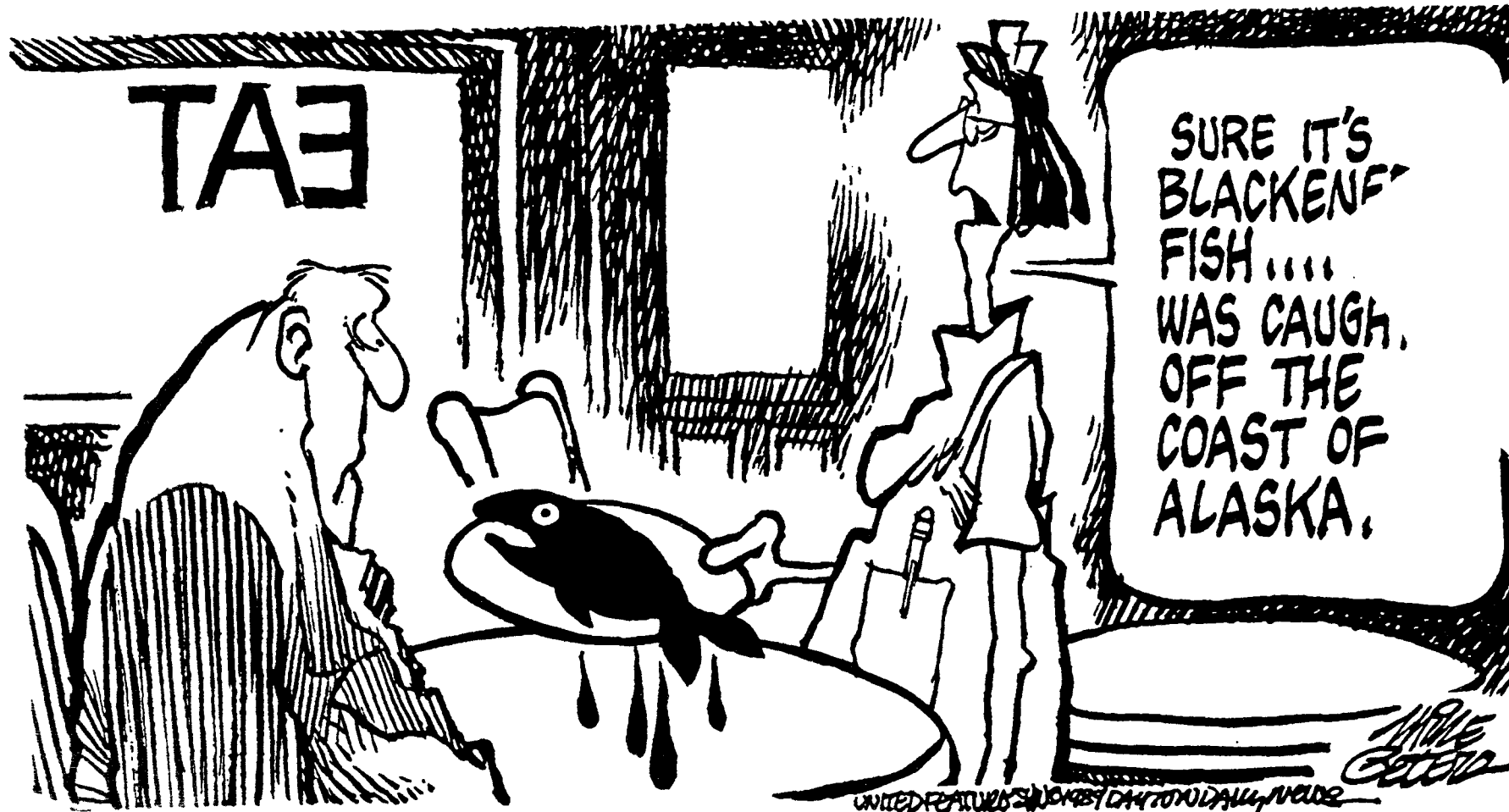
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ASHES & DIAMONDS

By Alexander Cockburn



The 'E-word' and the 'D-word'

We have to purge a couple of words from our vocabulary: "environmentalist" and "disaster."

"Environmentalism" formerly denoted someone with an active concern for nature and for man's proper interaction with it. It's now wedged between "family values" and "free market" as something any politician feels happy to invoke at a prayer breakfast of real estate operators. George Bush swears he is an environmentalist in the very same breath that he supports oil drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. A word you have to share with Bush is a word that's outlived its usefulness. Bruce Anderson, editor of the *Anderson Valley Advertiser*, suggests "eco-activist," which will serve for a while. It will take about a decade before they capture that one too.

"Disaster" is a more complex case. It suggests something both abrupt and horribly abnormal, and for that reason has always been useful in selling newspapers. The word also implies that outside the limited realms of the "disaster," everything is normal and OK. Thus the spill from the *Exxon Valdez* was a "disaster," but as the environmentalist George Bush was eager to point out, one "disaster," caused by one drunk captain, does not mean that you have to beef up measures to protect Alaska.

But in fact "disaster" is actually normalcy perceived at the level of symbolism. As James Ridgeway recently pointed out, the 500-plus wells on the North Slope produce 840,000 gallons of waste each year. The Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation recorded 953 spills involving oil and other liquids on the North Slope in 1985 and 1986. The contents of more than 250 reserve pits, each filled with 13 million gallons of toxic pollutants, are pumped onto gravel roads or the tundra each year. The whole coastal plain has been turned into a series of toxic

cesspools, and each year the North Slope emits more nitrogen oxides than the cars on the streets of Washington, D.C.

This is normalcy. The *Exxon Valdez* merely highlighted it. The second point is that even if the oil had not spilled out into Prince William Sound, it would have made its way down to the terminals in Long Beach and then ended up in the air over Los Angeles, San Francisco and other metropolitan areas. This too is normalcy, no longer defined as disaster. As I once remarked here, a lot of what is described as "news" is really a series of mild doses of anesthetic, habituating you slowly to the new order of things.

Smog over Los Angeles used to be a disaster but now is normal, whereas a clear day on which you can see the San Gabriel Mountains is now a stroke of good fortune. Normalcy in Alaska is now a series of toxic dumps, and soon Prince William Sound will become an "ordinary" commercial channel like the Houston Ship Channel, which periodically bursts into flame, like the Cuyahoga River in the Randy Newman song.

Nuclear Normalcy: Sometimes it becomes more than usually clear that what used to be seen as disaster—requiring demonstrative action by agents of the state, politicians, cleanup teams, etc.—has in fact been part of the warp and woof of ordinary life for a very long time. Nuclear "accidents" are still thought of as bona fide discrete and unusually unpleasant events. But now the truth is emerging that for many people around the world a nuclear disaster has been more or less continually in progress since World War II.

Last year, there was a whole rash of stories about these nuclear "disasters." Many of them were provoked by the excellent work of the Radioactive Waste Campaign, as resumed in its guide, *Deadly Defense*. It turned out that "normalcy" for people living near nuclear weapons production factories, laboratories and waste sites has consisted of living atop water tables saturated with nuclear wastes while breath-

ing irradiated air. The most disastrous normalcy seems to have occurred at Hanford, in Washington state, where managers over two decades released clouds of radioactive iodine, ruthenium, cesium, etc., from plant emission stacks, contaminated pastures and gardens hundreds of miles away, and on a number of occasions dosed the surrounding populace with lethal spurts of radiation, as in the famous "green run" experiment of Dec. 2, 1949, when families downwind received doses 10 times higher than those of Soviet citizens living around Chernobyl.

So far as U.S. citizens are concerned, the National Association of Radiation Survivors reckons that since the dawn of the nuclear age about 1.3 million people have been exposed to radiation from weapons being tested and developed. And how can you limit radiation to this number—even excluding atmospheric fallout? Where did that Hanford spurt peter out? So it turns out that the normalcy of a "Cold War" was in fact the "disaster" of a hot one, if you define a hot war as a situation in which a soldier would receive ultimately lethal doses of radiation.

The Loss of Abbie

Some disastrous extensions of normalcy—a definition of death—are particularly shocking. First Abbey, now Abbie. I'm too high in the alphabet to care for this train of events. Abbie's death is truly distressing. He was always full of life, full of ideas. He stayed the course. I spent a couple of hours the day after he died driving north to San Francisco, thinking how Abbie would have sounded on the themes that were preoccupying me that day: the *Exxon Valdez*, Bush as environmentalist, nuclear normalcy, the need for a boycott of Chilean fruit and vegetables. Any time I ever met him, notions poured out at full tilt, while Abbie's bright eyes fixed on you to see how his thoughts, his pitch, were going down.

In the best sense of the word, he was a salesman—of change, of hope, of the uses of action. As I drove, I had a tape of Simply Red running. "I've wasted all my tears, wasted all those years," Mick Hucknall sings in "Holding Back the Years." The thing about Abbie is that he didn't waste the years, and he never forgot the essentials of what it is all about. He was a very smart man, and a funny and likable one too. I would have liked to hear him on so many things, starting with the *Exxon Valdez*. Blame one guy with .05 in his bloodstream for destroying Alaska. Where's the chairman of Exxon? Why isn't he on trial? Abbie would have got it right. He was no environmentalist. He was an activist right down to the soles of his feet. I thought he had a lot more years in him, and I wish he were still with us. He understood the basic point: under capitalism you can't have benign normalcy, since normalcy is in fact disaster, and disaster is the index of normalcy. ■

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Fit to Print: A.M. Rosenthal and his Times

By Joseph C. Goulden
Lyle Stuart, 486 pp. \$21.95

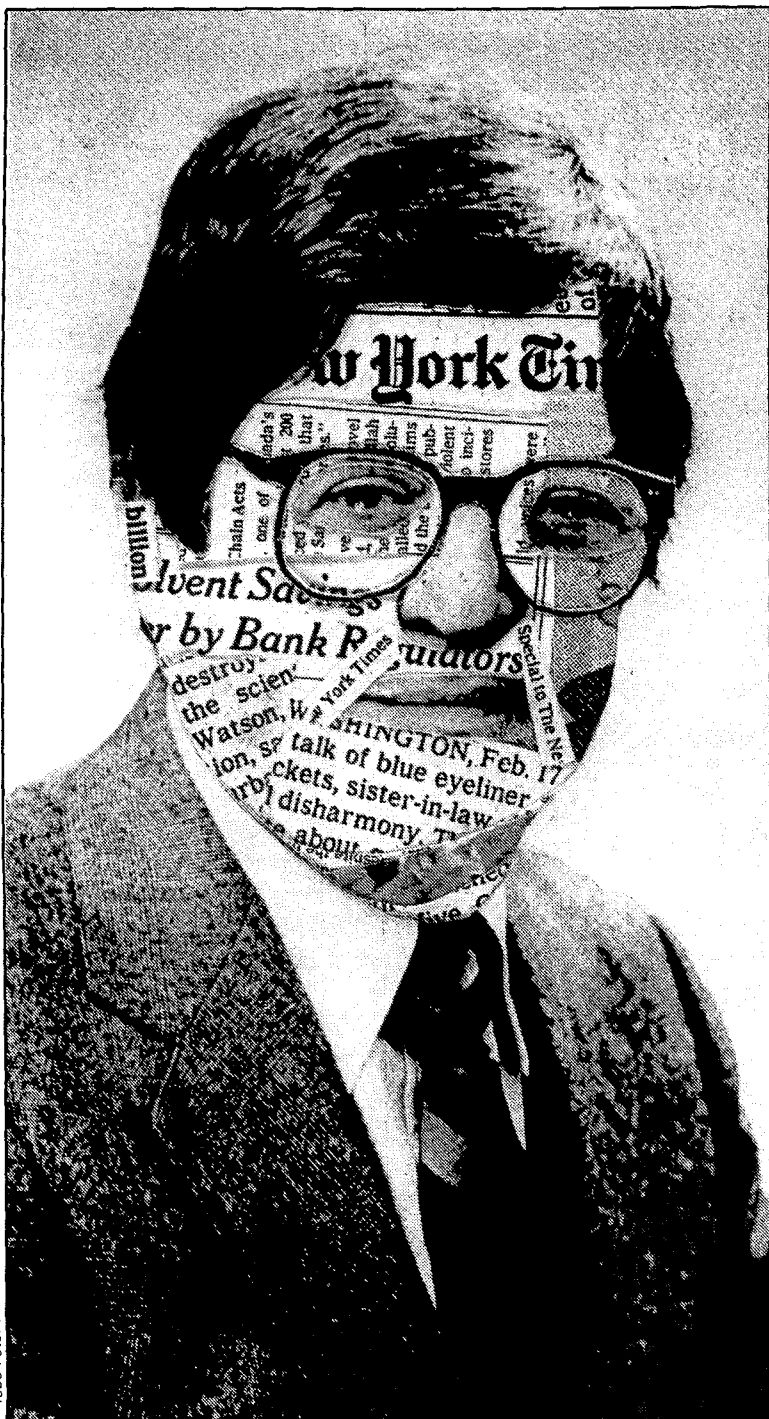
By Peter Karman

THE ENDLESS LOOP MESSAGE OF the commercial media is that we Americans live in the most open, democratic, creative and unassailably good country on Earth. Since our national intentions are always benign, our political acts are not subject to judgment. We remain forever the innocents in a scheming world. And somewhere on the feature page of our minds, there is always room for a bucolic rumination à la Charles Kuralt.

The proof of at least part of this national mythsturbation is that we are free to read a steady outpouring of books that remind us yet again that the media that sell us this story are themselves run like Ottoman satrapies in which authoritarianism, knife-in-the-back intrigues, nepotism, narrowness and toadyism are the preferred methods of operation. Hypocrisy, to paraphrase Rochefoucauld, is the daily tribune by which vice becomes virtue.

Notables in this field include CBS News, whose chicken-hearted executives cheerily wrung the neck of the allegedly ethical eagle of broadcast journalism. Then there is the Bingham family, whose bickerings over the once respected *Louisville Courier-Journal* have made them almost as famous as those other Louisville Sluggers. We are regularly advised of the acquisitional schemes of the 3Ms of the money media (Australia's Rupert Murdoch, Britain's Robert Maxwell and Korea's Sun Myung Moon, the latter who, in testament to the current estate of American journalism, effectively oversees the No. 2 newspaper in the nation's capital without personal recourse to the English language). The odd, personalist management capers of Allen H. Neuharth, father of *USA Today*, the McPaper that pioneered the trend away from old-style readership to modern-day scannership, make a story too long and strange to capsulize here. Most recently, the merger of Time Inc. and Warner Communications, two media giants run by the ghosts of departed founders, reminds us that fewer and fewer are telling us less and less for more and more.

Believe the hype: The saga of A.M. Rosenthal, current columnist and retired executive editor of the *New York Times*, fits this scheme perfectly. Here is a fellow who, according to this, the most detailed of the many bandied accounts of his career, is an ardent champion of openness, democracy and straight shooting everywhere on Earth—except, of course, in the offices of the *Times*. In those precincts, according to Goulden's in-



Abe Rosenthal's times: *Fit to Print* is rich with the colorful duplicity of big-time journalism.

Paper of record, paper of recipes

formative but annoying book, Rosenthal's obsequiousness to his betters was matched only by his arbitrariness to all others. But that's understandable, Goulden notes, because "the *Times* is so arrogant that hypocritical conduct is accepted there as matter of course."

Abe Rosenthal was a Depression Jew from New York City who once aspired to a steady job in the post office. Childhood disease enfeebled his legs. Poverty, hard luck and recurring death in his family wounded his psyche. He overcame these troubles, but they left their mark. At the tuition-free City College of New York, he worked on the school paper and became the campus stringer for the *New York Times*. The *Times* hired him as a reporter in 1944. He was eager and bright. He put his given names in initials because the *Times*, owned

by an old-line Jewish family, was sensitive about having Jewish bylines on its pages.

Rosenthal's rise at the paper was not meteoric. He did well covering the U.N. in its early days, but had to beg for years for his first foreign assignment. In 1955 he was sent to India, and a few years later to Poland, where he displayed a talent for developing stories that, along with reflecting the approved political angle, also managed to provide insights into the life and culture of the countries he covered. His pieces on the political bankruptcy of the Gomulka regime won him expulsion from Poland, but also a Pulitzer Prize and the favor of the gods in the paneled offices.

In those days, the *Times* was a stodgy old dowager whose foreign reporting consisted mostly of diplomatic dispatches and the usual trite features about springtime in

Paris. All the paper's writing, good and bad, was processed by an army of editors whose job it was to make sure that every story was not only as dull as the next, but also that whatever key bit of information the reader longed for was, if not omitted, at least buried in a distant para-

NEWS

graph. This ponderous *Times* style, reflecting the institution itself, has since been a trifle dolled up—like Queen Elizabeth at Fergie's baby shower—but not essentially altered.

Flagging decency: Rosenthal was made city editor, where he produced his biggest journalistic coup, the Kitty Genovese story. What began as a routine mugging-murder soon troubled the conscience of a city and a nation when Rosenthal-generated stories pressed the point that 38 neighbors in a middle-class neighborhood in Queens had listened for half an hour to Genovese's screams for help without calling the

Under Rosenthal, the *Times* presented the news on the basis of greater fear and frivolity than previously.

police. Coming in the wake of the Kennedy assassination, the 1964 tale loosed the fear, or perhaps the realization, that America's sense of decency and community, the great legacy of pioneer days and, more recently, of the good spirits of World War II, was dying.

The kingdom of the *Times* consisted of four duchies: the city, national, Washington and foreign desks. Having been elevated to one, Rosenthal set out immediately to conquer the other three. Goulden efficiently details the intrigues, ambushes and betrayals involved in this successful campaign. He gives good portraits of A.O. "Punch" Sulzberger, the lightweight scion who inherited the *Times*, and of the other players involved. The book is rich with the sort of New York neurotic power types that aficionados of the town will find comprehendingly contemptible.

Rosenthal's rise to excessive editorship parallels the great opening of the late '60s and early '70s, when people learned that if you didn't have it in you to rebel, you could at least indulge in good conscience. For years the *Times* had been haughtily telling the presiding classes the things it thought they should know. One of these was that the Vietnam War was a divisive and self-defeating endeavor. Another was that New York City was a holy mess.

Too negative, said the advertising

department. The rich and powerful will not buy goods from purveyors who don't tell them happy things about themselves. Sulzberger understood this implicitly, and Rosenthal did so abjectly. Under Rosenthal's guidance, through the '70s the *Times* was remade into a service manual for the eager but uncertain affluent. Headlines the size of those that once proclaimed wars and depressions now announced ways to use tarragon or to decorate Soho lofts. Soft features replaced the rare examples of gutsy reporting (My Lai and the Pentagon Papers stories, among others) that had kept the *Times*' virtue intact. The most telling example of this new triviality was Rosenthal's out-to-lunch coverage of Watergate. **Betrayal and voyeurism:** Having limned the fall of the "newspaper of record" to the newspaper of recipes, Goulden devotes the rear end of his book to the fallout from Rosenthal's megalomania. The *Times*' innate fuddy-duddyism, in combination with Rosenthal's overarching ambition and pettyfogging animus, produced terrible morale in the ranks. When top-notch journalists quit in disgust, when gutsy *Times*-women filed suit to mitigate the palpable anti-feminism of their superiors, and when Richard Severo, a *Times* reporter, was sentenced to eternity on the infamous Rosenthal shitlist for a minor slight, a bad taste was left in the mouths even of lick-spittles.

Rosenthal turned the mandatory *Times* retirement age of 65 in 1986. He didn't want to go, but no one wanted him to stay. He was given a twice-weekly column and packed off. Goulden offers a scathing look at his personal life in these recent years, emphasizing Rosenthal's private practice of those characteristic journalistic traits of betrayal and voyeurism.

The book is annoying because of a few obvious but telling factual errors (Green Peace is not a West German anti-nuclear movement but an international environmental group) and because of Goulden's bald indulgence of Accuracy in Media's crackpot indolent Reed Irvine, who whispered, apparently to some effect, in Sulzberger's ear about the supposed leftist biases of the money press.

Under Rosenthal's regime, the *Times* decided to present the news on the basis of greater fear, favor and frivolity than previously. No doubt, that would have happened without him. His accomplishment was to behave in a way that reminds us that the system cannot be better than those in charge of it.

Last year columnist Abe Rosenthal managed to become the first Western newsman to enter a Soviet gulag and report on its inmates. Reading his pieces, I couldn't help thinking that as bad as those poor devils have it, they can at least be thankful that Abe Rosenthal is not their warder. ■

Column Right: Conservative Journalists in the Service of Nationalism

By David Burner and Thomas R. West
New York University Press
115 pp., \$19.95

By Dennis Perrin

THE CANCER KNOWN AS POWER-worshipping, forever present in the body of American media, spread in malignant leaps during the Reagan years. Here was an administration devoted to disinformation and obedience, corporate enrichment and banana republics. From the swooning press flock rose a clutch of commentators who explained the reasons for empire. In speech and print these state minds strode mightily, filling the air with righteous bluster. Yet, despite the smell, this crowd was taken quite seriously.

Unfortunately, David Burner and Thomas R. West, co-authors of *Column Right*, take these people seriously as well. This slender volume focuses on five elite commentators: George Will, William F. Buckley, Charles Krauthammer, Irving Kristol and Jeane Kirkpatrick. Burner and West's overly forgiving attitude toward their subjects, wrapped in gelatinous prose, makes *Column Right* a sluggish read.

Of the five, only Will and Krauthammer appear frequently in multiple forums. Their repeated appearances and influence on the game make them worthy of study. Buckley, while still a syndicated columnist, is chiefly confined to *National Review*

Stolid right jabs from the 'con' cartel

and the newly truncated version of *Firing Line*. Kirkpatrick, also syndicated (and as overrated an intellectual as you'll ever find), spends her time at the American Enterprise Institute and on the speaking circuit, popping up now and again on television. And Kristol, bless his heart, remains at home in his conservative parlor softly chattering away.

The triumph of George Will?
The authors define Will as a "classi-

RIGHT WING

cal" conservative whose "central concern, perhaps, is for the development of civic virtue." They tread on to explain what Will considers virtuous, correcting him when he missteps, then close the chapter thus: "Here is a journalism that looks beyond the merely civic responsibilities, that informs an affluent nation and citizenry of what they owe the common store, a subject that the affluent do not often get around to discussing. And there will never be too many journalists for that."

Considering the sources Burner and West use for their study, the above conclusion seems unduly tender. On the 1983 bombing of the Marine barracks in Lebanon, Will is quoted as saying, "In Beirut, America suffered a serious military defeat, the significance of which is growing as the weeks pass without an American response." While pressing for another round of bloodshed, Will ig-



George Will's fuzzy conservatism came to the fore in the '80s.

nored that the bombing came *after* U.S. naval forces shelled Druze villages in Beirut, making the U.S. partisan in a civil war. The authors ignore this, too, preferring to compare Will's rage with that of William Randolph Hearst's anger over the sinking of the *Maine*.

Commenting on the domestic advantages of the KAL 007 downing, Will explained that "the public mind, like wax, is easiest to shape when

heated." The authors decide that Will's remark "suggests...Will, putting no trust in a morally and intellectually weak public, wants an elite to manipulate raw emotions." Suggests? Will's comment declares contempt for an informed public and the desire to personally adjust the frame of discussion.

Burner and West save most of their sugar for Krauthammer, a man whose intellect they describe as

"analytical, independent and aloof." His essays are "attractive" and "distinctive." He is drawn as a defender of traditional liberalism (the Truman-Kennedy-Johnson color, endlessly hailed), which is true enough if you recognize traditional liberalism's historical commitment to global intervention and counterinsurgency. Krauthammer's phrase, "The Reagan Doctrine," lent a noble veneer to contemporary uses of state violence and coercion.

Ruling thought can perhaps be better understood by examining the underlying premises. An excellent illustration comes from a Will essay in the Sept. 14, 1987, *Newsweek* (not cited in the book). Will describes the U.S. as a nation "which began relatively recently on a continent that was a blank slate to be written on."

Here is historical revision at its silkiest. Will doesn't bother with the indigenous population destroyed by European expansion—this would make American history too messy. He, like any solid propagandist, needs that "blank slate" so the American story can be inscribed without unnecessary plot twists.

By buying into the many myths presented in their study, Burner and West help contribute to the Great Epic. And as a result, this effort merely steps on broken ground. ■ **Dennis Perrin** is a New York-based writer and contributor to *Extra!*, the publication of *Fairness & Accuracy in Reporting*.

Lonesome Traveler: A Biography of Lee Hays

By Doris Willens
W.W. Norton and Co.
225 pp., \$17.95

By Robbie Lieberman

WHAT LEE HAYS CALLED THE Big Question was a fundamental one for left-wing singers and songwriters: could one create and sing songs aimed at making the world a better place and also achieve commercial success? This question has aroused controversy at least since the success of the Weavers in the early '50s, when the folk music magazine *Sing Out!* criticized the group for chasing success at the expense of musical quality. The new biography of Hays, *Lonesome Traveler*, raises The Big Question several times but doesn't fully communicate its significance.

To learn the essential details of Hays' life and to glimpse his sense of humor, one needs read no more than Jim Capaldi's interview with him (*Sing Out!* 28, September-October 1980). Doris Willens' biography augments this view with the accounts of Hays' friends and colleagues, who describe him as "cantankerous," "a genius," "funny," "irascible" and "brilliant."

Big questions and some small answers

The son of a Methodist preacher, Hays spent his young life in Arkansas and Georgia. His father died when Lee was 13. Hays' life was changed dramatically by his work with Presbyterian preacher/labor organizer Claude Williams, and with Zilphia Horton at the Highlander Folk

MUSIC

School. He came to New York City in the '40s and joined the Almanac Singers, which included Woody Guthrie and Pete Seeger. He later sang with the Weavers from 1948 until they disbanded permanently in the early '60s (with a number of years off during the blacklist, which included an appearance before the House Un-American Activities Committee). The success of "If I Had a Hammer," which Hays wrote with Seeger, ensured him an income after the Weavers broke up.

Willens speculates that the hurt Hays carried from his childhood led him to "the search for substitute fathers, the restless looking for a home, the identification with those

who had nothing." She devotes much attention to the tempestuous relationship between Hays and Seeger, "two giants whose talents and beliefs kept bringing them together, and whose personal traits and idiosyncracies kept driving them apart." Willens suggests that Lee's diabetes and tuberculosis (not diagnosed until the '70s) could have accounted for his moodiness and malingering. But while differences in metabolism may have provoked Pete to ask Lee to leave the Almanac Singers, differences over The Big Question caused Pete to leave the Weavers. Pete felt imprisoned by the agreement to avoid controversial appearances that might jeopardize the group's commercial reputation, while Ronnie Gilbert, Fred Hellerman and Lee were delighted with their mass audiences.

While it is fun to learn the details of Hays' personal life, more of his political and musical ideas could have been presented here, for these are his true legacy. Like many other artists and intellectuals of the '30s, '40s and '50s, Hays was shaped by

and in turn helped to shape, the culture of the left-wing movement. It was their political ideals and commitments that helped enable artists and musicians to persist, believing (as Gilbert says of the Weavers in the film *Wasn't That a Time!*) "that if we sang loud enough and strong enough and hopefully enough, somehow it would make a difference."

Willens leaves out the explicit connections to the movement. While it doesn't matter whether Hays was a Communist Party member or not (consensus seems to be that he wasn't), his statements on the subject deserve more attention. For example, Hays told Capaldi, "When it came to shifts and turns in the

Lee Hays proved one could be good and commercial.

Party line, I didn't pay any attention to them. I knew what I thought was right, and I wasn't gonna lose sleep over it." These remarks are echoed in Willens' book: "If the Communists liked what we did, that was their good luck.... I suppose the most that I can claim is that I was a fellow traveler." The Party didn't give orders to musicians about what to sing,

but the broader communist culture helped shape the singers' outlook; the singers in turn helped hold the movement together, particularly during difficult times. The history of the Almanac Singers, "that independent bunch of stubborn people" who changed their repertoire as the Party changed its line, exemplifies this complex relationship.

Willens' warm and sympathetic biography somehow understates Hays' contribution. What's missing is the connection between Hays' search for home and family and the impact of his songs, singing and humor on the left and on American culture as a whole. Hays was among those who made it possible to be both good and commercial, to make a living writing and singing songs with social and political content. As a result, we have gone from the Almanac Singers and the Weavers to Bob Dylan, Bruce Springsteen, U2 and Tracy Chapman. The contradictions remain—The Big Question hasn't been fully answered—yet these people do make a difference. Imagine what American pop music would be like without such lonesome travelers. ■

Robbie Lieberman is author of the forthcoming book *My Song is My Weapon: People's Songs, American Communism and the Politics of Culture* (University of Illinois Press).

IN THE ARTS

By Pat Aufderheide

DON'T WORRY, THE FEDERAL Communications Commission (FCC) has calmly assured the public for years. Broadcasters—who use the public spectrum to sell audiences to advertisers—don't need regulation to make them serve the public interest.

Who needs it, when you have the marketplace?

But according to "Shortchanging the Viewers," a just-released study by the Nader group Essential Information, the market stall for public affairs programming is ever more bare. Author Jim Donahue, comparing FCC reports from 1979 with local TV Guide reports for a sample of 217 TV stations from 1988, found that local public affairs programming has decreased 39 percent.

More ominous, the newer entrants to the TV marketplace are the worst offenders. Some 63 percent of Fox Broadcasting affiliates air no locally produced public affairs programs at all, and a whopping 87 percent of the Fox stations air no local news. Indeed, 15 percent of all stations had no news on the air at all in 1988.

Erasing the lines: Interestingly, Donahue also found that total news programming is up substantially—74 percent—since 1975. Of course, the terms on which it is produced have changed a lot. Reality programming and tabloid TV are erasing the lines between gossip, titillation and news. And the trend, even in network news, is heralded in an April 5 *Variety*, whose headline reads, "Introspection at NBC: Is No News Good News?"

At NBC, ex-General Electric exec and network president Bob Wright has shaken up the money-losing news department by setting profit-making goals. There's been talk of charging guests on the *Today* show for their appearances, and Wright has even raised the specter of abolishing the *Nightly News*. More likely is increased production of quasi-news—for instance, a collab-

Tonight's Lead story, Amy, Our investigative team has found a BIG Box. We'll open it live at 10.

Now that's BIG news Eric! I really wonder what's in it!!



© 1989 Miles DeCoster

Public interest, private principal

oration between the news and entertainment divisions in an infotainment show—and expansion of overseas markets.

Broadcasters are also selling information by the hour, in the new phenomenon of program-length

TELEVISION

commercials about such burning social issues as cellulite, hair loss and real estate scams. Donahue found that program-length commercials, prohibited until the '80s, now take up 2.6 percent of broadcast air time.

But the change is most pronounced in the areas of local news and public affairs—the areas where, unlike reality programming and tabloid TV, citizens can participate in debate over issues they have an immediate stake in.

It's the least they can do: Why

has the broadcast menu changed so much? Broadcasters could always make bigger profits by running other programs, including sensationalist reality shows and infotainment. The difference now is that they don't have to air public affairs programming any more. In the old days, before 1984, the FCC set minimum guidelines for broadcasters: 5 percent of their time to air informational (public affairs plus news) programming, 5 percent to locally produced programs and 10 percent to non-entertainment programs. To safeguard their license renewals, stations mostly met those standards, although often with low-budget shows aired early in the morning or late at night.

Nowadays, with cutbacks in news staffs and bottom-line pressures stemming from mergers and frequent station sales fostered by dere-

gulation, broadcasters do without the public affairs frills. As a CBS affiliate assistant public affairs director in North Carolina told Donahue,

Tabloid TV, reality programming and infotainment shows are erasing the long-established lines between gossip, titillation and news.

"You can sell commercials and an hour of *Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous* a whole lot better than an hour of a public affairs show."

It's not only the content that's gone. So is accountability. In the old days, the FCC required broadcasters to make their program logs (the daily record of programming) open to the public. No longer. And when Donahue asked stations and networks for their program logs, he got stonewalled. A shocking 97 percent of the 1,017 stations he contacted refused to give him logs, although most stations still keep them. One Fox affiliate news and public affairs director simply said, "What's in it for me besides wasting my time?"

The Essential Information report also traces the decline in public affairs programs to the FCC's abandonment of the Fairness Doctrine in 1987. The doctrine required broadcasters to air controversial programming, and to air it fairly. Since the study compares 1988 with FCC studies from the '70s, it's difficult to

trace the changes directly to the end of the doctrine (which Congress may reinstate this session—see *In These Times*, Feb. 22). But the report does suggest a powerful link between deregulation and changes in programming and broadcasters' attitudes toward public scrutiny.

Chilling controversy: The broadcast industry is not taking the charges lying down. The Radio-Television News Directors Association (RTNDA) denies that the end of the Fairness Doctrine—which it and the National Association of Broadcasters claim "chilled" airing of controversy because broadcasters feared accusations of unfair coverage—has anything to do with declining public affairs programming. RTNDA accuses Essential Information of ignoring "the enormous changes in the marketplace since 1975"—as if those changes were not made possible by deregulation.

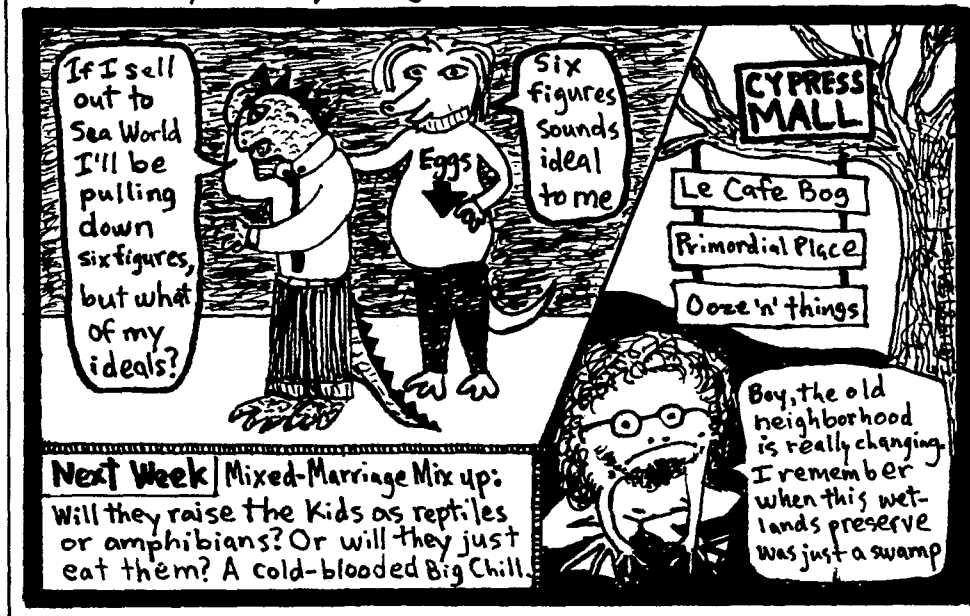
RTNDA cites the growth in the number of broadcast stations (many of them, of course, with no local news or public affairs) and the growth in cable news shows (although broadcast TV is still the most-watched medium, and only half of American TV homes get cable). It faults the study for using percentages rather than total hours, since more stations came on the air in the period studied. However, the percentages mark a proportional decline in such programming, even if more stations are on the air. Finally, RTNDA damns the study for depending on not-fully-accurate *TV Guide* listings—although station managers left Donahue with no alternative.

"Shortchanging the Viewers" (available from Essential Information, P.O. Box 19405, Washington, DC 20036) is the first quantitative study to show what many public interest producers, religious organizations, unions and issue groups have been saying for years: the new media marketplace is bad for public debate of public issues. It is bolstered by other studies. For instance, the U.S. Public Interest Research Group recently showed that during the 1988 election many stations refused to provide time to air controversy on ballot issues—even though by law they are still required to. Like the elegant argument Jay Blumler put forward in his Benton Foundation study on communications policy options (see *In These Times*, March 29), it makes the case for developing a regulatory framework that frees broadcasters to do programming that's not just focused on the highest rate of return.

The danger is that the longer we wait, the more the evolving landscape comes to look normal to the next generation of viewers. American TV viewers will feed on an electronic information diet high in junk-food news and low in the essential vitamins and minerals for a healthy democracy: vigorous and controversial public affairs reporting. ■

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This week on **thirtyswamthing**: a monster of a mid-life crisis



Rough
CUTS
TAKEN

Heritage fest feeds regional traditions

By Jim Dulzo

OVER THE NEXT TWO WEEKENDS some 350,000 people, many from out of town, will migrate to an old racetrack on the north side of the Crescent City for an event that now rivals the Mardi Gras: the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival. The happy crowd will crunch, munch and sip its way through huge amounts of Louisiana-style home cooking and Miller beer and enjoy a mind- and body-boggling array of South Coast music: traditional and modern jazz, rhythm and blues, zydeco, gospel, folk, blues, Cajun, bluegrass, Latin, Caribbean and plain old rock'n'roll.

With 3,000 musicians, 440 bands, 11 different stages at the fairgrounds and big shows downtown during the intervening week, with 100 media outlets on the press list, the festival promises to make a big national splash during this 20th anniversary season, which runs from April 28 to May 7. The festival's sheer size and spellbinding musical variety will be what captures most people's attention. But something more important is also going on here: this festival is struggling to be a model for community participation, not just cultural commodification.

"To the extent that the festival is well done, with authenticity, we try to stay away from that [commodification]," says Tom Dent, an African-American poet and writer who is executive director of the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Foundation, which oversees the festival's producers. Dent and his board work to keep the festival firmly on a community track. "There's more than the producers who are involved in this," he says. "There are 30 people who engage in a great deal of discussion and argumentation all year long."

Building a strong foundation: Many of Dent's board members are also African-Americans. As a board, they have great power over the festival. They hire big-time promoter George Wein and Festival Productions Inc. (FPI) to create this annual musical gumbo, and they oversee its \$3 million budget. They also distribute some of the net revenues to community groups and strive to ensure that, as Vera Warren, assistant director of the festival's Congo Square area puts it, there is more involvement by blacks than "playing the music and cleaning up after."

Progress toward that goal has been steady in a city that's one-third black. Warren notes that "when the festival started, there was little participation by black vendors. In 1979 community merchants and vendors made an effort to change that."

The result was "Koindu" (now called Congo Square), a combination

of African-American crafts, an African and Caribbean music stage and a self-management arrangement that makes it a fair within the festival. Koindu's arrival effectively doubled the number of black vendors involved, although many of the festival's 50 food vendors have been black-owned and operated all along. The food vendors are largely mom-and-pop operations such as the Second True Love Baptist Church's barbecued chicken concession.

"It's the biggest project our church participates in," says True Love's Clarence Dunbar. "It's helped us tremendously, because we feel so good

MUSIC

about it and it makes us money for our community church. There's the mortgage, and we have a lot of people who are in need of food."

Black by popular demand: Affirmative action is a much more difficult proposition, however, when it comes to the more skilled technical areas. For example, only one of the festival's dozen or so sound companies is black-owned. Quint Davis, the festival's producer and director, who works for the foundation as an employee of FPI, knows there is room for improvement.

"I've always been very interested in that function of the festival," he says. "We are now taking a look at using the resources of the producers to effect training and outreach in a number of areas: arts management, purchasing, field crews, construction teams.... It is very broad and far-reaching. Really, it is the difference between being a community event and making a buck."

Davis says that four of the festival staff's top seven executive positions are now filled by blacks.

"We are pretty proud of it," he says of their progress. "We have to be prodded a bit. Sometimes people on staff have felt a little insecure or paranoid. But affirmative action is fine; I always demand the ability to choose the individuals, that's all."

A profitable tradition: Davis rates his staff as "brilliant." They have overseen the festival's growth into an event of colossal size and scope, done with taste, executed with precision (show start times are amazingly prompt) and with a minimum of commercialism. Some question the use of big-name stars at the fairgrounds and the downtown venues who have little relevance to the South Coast tradition. But they do help draw the huge crowds; today, the festival is a fairly reliable moneymaker. The foundation has awarded \$375,000 in grants in the past eight years, for various projects: creative workshops at drug rehab centers, new band equipment for a city elementary school, storytelling



New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival at 20: oh, when the tourists come marching in.

concerts, craft instruction, expansion of the arts curriculum at New Orleans public schools. Last year alone the foundation distributed \$100,000 to 80 different groups. And each year it gives away 10,000 free tickets and 15,000 \$3 tickets to the city's poor who can't afford the festival's \$9 admission.

The foundation's most ambitious project to date has been the outright purchase of a small public radio station, WWOZ, including the creation of a separate board to oversee its development and an annual \$60,000 subsidy while the station tries to create its own sufficient base of listener donors. The station volunteers program New Orleans-style music almost exclusively—a year-round version of what the festival offers. And although the foundation already supports education with lectures, workshops and mini-festivals, it is contemplating an even larger role with a proposal to launch a school of music.

"When you consider that the city itself has not put a single dollar into culture," says Kalamu Ya Salaam, a writer and former foundation executive director, "and that the main funder for the arts here, the New Orleans Arts Council, spends \$100,000 a year—when you consider that, the foundation is right up there."

In most cities, festivals are usually the ones asking for, not distributing, the money. But perhaps just as unusual is the fact that although the festival has 18 corporate sponsors this year, it has never attached a corporate logo to its official name. Wein attempted a name-linked sponsorship with Kool cigarettes a few years ago, when Kool sponsored 25 jazz festivals nationwide. He was quite angry when the festival nixed the Kool tie-in, but now, with Kool out of the festival business and many of

those other festivals greatly diminished as a result, the New Orleans festival continues to grow with corporate support that is mostly local, largely unobtrusive and quite stable for a city that is in such bad economic straits.

The festival is struggling to be a model for community participation.

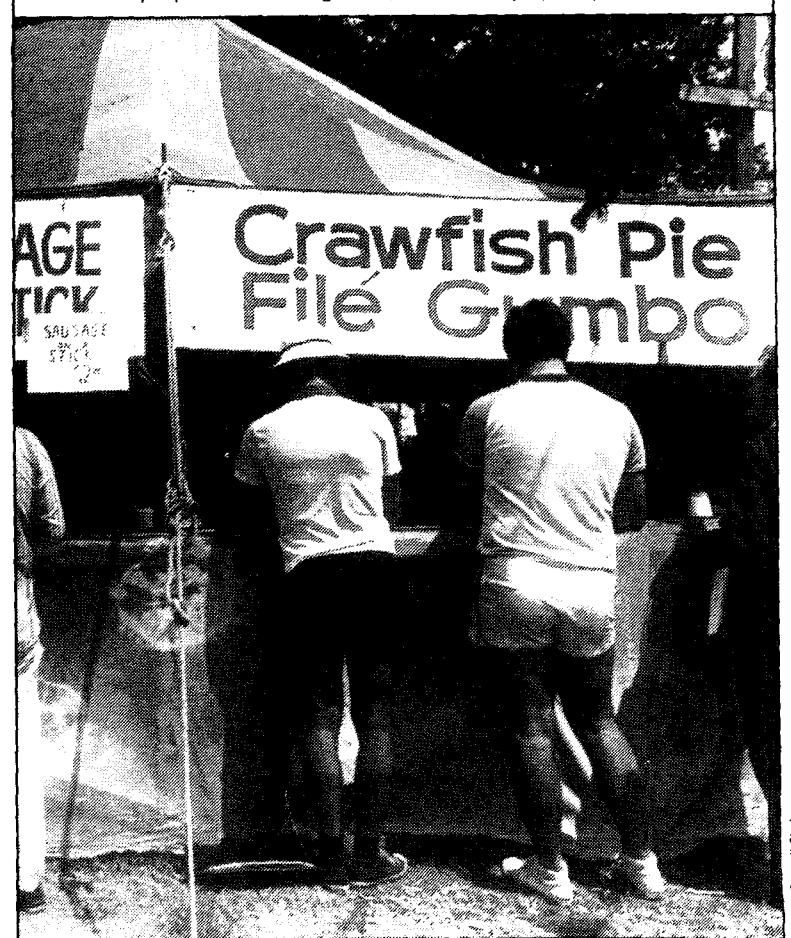
Dent is not satisfied, however. He knows how deep and stubborn the

racism is in his city and in this country. The bigger the festival gets, the more it must contend with institutional racism and outside interests angling for a piece of the action.

"There has been tremendous change and a lot of progress," he says as he dreams of another, all-black festival that the city might one day have. "I have to say, though, when I go to other festivals and look around, I feel a lot better about our struggles. We are developing a body of skilled people that did not exist before in this city. We've always had the musicians, but not the other people."

Jim Dulzo is a Detroit-area writer, broadcaster and concert producer.

Community input: a musical gumbo, an edible symphony.



AIDS/Prisoners

Continued from page 10

set up to counter the COC's Sing Sing report and the Correctional Association's scathing critique of the system. But additional beds are not always what's needed most. The beds are needed only when complications arise, about 20 percent of the time, and when the inmates are permanently debilitated. "At that point you've got to separate them. That's just common sense," Gresham says.

In the September 1988 issue of *DOCS Today*, the system's magazine that is distributed to inmates and staff, Coughlin apparently agrees. "What we are trying to do is provide a mix: HIV-positive inmates who are otherwise healthy belong in the general prison population; those who are sick belong in infirmaries [or in] ambulatory, skilled nursing or acute care units—whichever level of care a physician deems medically indicated."

To segregate a known HIV-positive inmate and then return him to the general population is a dangerous proposition, Gresham counters. He could be assaulted by other inmates and guards.

"Should any inmate demonstrate being victim-prone," Coughlin wrote, "I will take action regardless of the assailant's motivation. But to simply claim all HIV-infected inmates are victim-prone is ludicrous."

AIDSpeak: The Correctional Association's June 1988 report also condemned the lack of education within the New York state system.

Nine months earlier Coughlin had testified before the Association of the Bar of the City of New York that AIDS prevention through education was "our highest priority." He said

new correctional officers received three hours of AIDS education, all guards and inmates received written AIDS information, and some attended videotape presentations, including showings of an inmate-produced, Emmy Award-winning documentary of the AIDS unit at Sing Sing, *AIDS: A Bad Way to Die*.

At New York's Green Haven Facility, an inmate group called Hispanics United for Progress asked for permission to offer inmates risk-reduction advice and counseling. The proposal, supported by black and other inmate groups, was turned down.

Instead the administration agreed to train five selected inmates, including Cruz Salgado and David Hunter, to counsel terminally ill inmates who requested it. Salgado complains that no counseling is involved, only handholding.

Meanwhile, Hunter says, seven inmates live in the prison's AIDS unit, which he and other inmates describe as dimly lit, in need of paint and far from all prison activity and meaningful human contact.

"It's strange that all this in-house involvement is going on," Hunter says, "and these guys are in the back, in the dark."

Inmate Richard Rivera says the group planned to have an "AIDS Awareness Day." They spent months lining up entertainment and speakers.

"This was going to be it," Rivera says. "We'd get publicity."

But after a reporter called Coughlin's office in Albany, the event was canceled. The inmates' view is that the administration did not want them to feel they had power. ☐

Paul Rykoff Coleman is a student at Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism.

AIDS/Minorities

Continued from page 9

will have an incentive to rent needles at shooting galleries rather than venturing with them into the streets. A junkie who has just scored and is desperate to shoot up often can't be bothered to sterilize his needle first. IVDUs who use cocaine shoot up every 10 to 15 minutes, which makes pausing to use bleach all the more inconvenient. And while there is some evidence that bleach is catching on, nonetheless, it seems to be the rare male IVDU who will pause to put on a condom before having sex with his girlfriend or wife. And, as yet another example of how political powerlessness promotes the spread of AIDS, it is evidently the even rarer ghetto woman who is in a position to make him.

"It's very difficult to tell the black and Hispanic women to tell their sex partners to use condoms," said Ronald Bayer, a professor at the Columbia University School of Public Health. "They're afraid, physically afraid, afraid of losing their partners." As a result, they don't dare say no, and the virus

spreads further through the heterosexual black and Hispanic population.

There's no telling where it will end. Stabilization of the HIV infection rate among IVDUs is ultimately likely, but the number of AIDS cases in relation to all deaths will continue to multiply. For non-IVDU women, the outlook is even more frightening. HIV's long latency period means that young black and Hispanic women in AIDS-stricken neighborhoods run an increasing risk of catching the virus through heterosexual contact. Promiscuity certainly heightens the chances, but this is to not say that others will not be running a risk as well. Even if it's been years since a man shot drugs, the virus lingers and transmission remains a possibility. Young women may lead exemplary lives, according to the standards of preacher or priest, yet there remains a significant possibility that they will contract the disease.

Once AIDS gains a foothold in a community, it is extremely difficult to control, much less root out. And it has gained more than a foothold in places like Brooklyn, Harlem and the South Bronx. ☐

C A L E N D A R

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NEW YORK

April 24-28

THE NEW YORK MARXIST SCHOOL
MONDAY, APRIL 24—Coca and Revolution, Jo Ann Kaywell, Mark Chernick, 8 p.m.
TUESDAY, APRIL 25—El Salvador: History in the Making, Arnoldo Ramos, 8 p.m.
THURSDAY, APRIL 27—Artists and Activism, 8 p.m.
FRIDAY, APRIL 28—Marxism and Liberation Theology: Terms for Dialogue, Michael Zweig, 6 p.m.
Sartre: L'Enfant Terrible, John Gerassi, 8 p.m.

Events take place at the Brecht Forum, 79 Leonard St. (five blocks below Canal, between Church and Broadway). Unless otherwise listed, admission is \$5. For information call (212) 941-0332.

April 29

The New York State Labor History Association presents "Immigrants, Ethnicity and Politics: A Labor History Conference." The conference will take place at New York University, Loeb Student Center, Room 310, La Guardia Place and Washington Square South in Manhattan from 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Panels on immigrant labor and working-class politics; unions, black workers and the civil rights movement; and new immigrants: labor politics and the changing work force. Speakers include Charles Tilly, New School for Social Research; Morris Schappes, *Jewish Currents*; Ada Garcia, Local 1199; Wilbur Haddock, Urban Parents Institute, former Ford worker; Dan Georgakas, author; Katie Quan, ILGWU; Saskia Sassen, Columbia University; Muzaffar Chishti, Immigration Project; and others. For further information call Mike Hirsch at (212) 265-2366. Registration \$25, includes lunch. \$15 students/low income.

May 4

"Eastern Europe's Independent Peace and Human Rights Movements: Spotlight on Poland." Speakers: Jacek Czaputowicz, a founder of Freedom and Peace, Poland's independent peace and ecology movement. He is an editor of *Future Times* magazine and a member of Lech Walesa's Citizens' Committee; and Elzbieta Piwowarska, a student of sociology in Krakow, Poland, where she has participated in recent student demonstrations. She has been an active member of Freedom and Peace and currently works for *Future Times*. 8 p.m., Swayduck Auditorium, New School, 65 Fifth Ave. (near 14th St.). Free. Co-sponsors: Humanitas International, American Friends Service Committee/N.Y., Campaign for Peace and Democracy/East and West, Neither East Nor West, New School Committee on Liberal Studies, War Resisters International. (212) 724-1157.

CHICAGO

April 14-May 20

"Hold the Line," a new play by Christine Sumption, opens April 14 and runs through May 20. Centers on McCarthy period and Cold War. For tickets and

information, call (312) 769-5199. Zebra Crossing Theatre, 4520 N. Beacon. Tickets \$10.

May 6

The 31st Annual Thomas-Debs Dinner honors William Winpisinger, President of IAM, Vice-Chair of DSA; and Milt and Sue Cohen, longtime Chicago activists; with Dr. Quentin Young as featured speaker. At the Midland Hotel, 172 W. Adams: cocktails 6 p.m., dinner 7 p.m. Tickets: \$35 each or \$60 as patrons. Make checks payable to Thomas-Debs Dinner Committee. Be sure your organization is represented in our program book! Contact Chicago DSA, 1608 N. Milwaukee, Room 403, Chicago, IL 60647, (312) 384-0327 for details.

MARION, IL

April 29

Several buses from Chicago and other cities will take demonstrators to southern Illinois to join local people in protest against conditions at the U.S. penitentiary at Marion. They will demand that the government stop the flow of contaminated water, end the lockdown, abolish control units and end selective mistreatment of political prisoners. Beginning with a 10 a.m. rally on the Southern Illinois University campus, the demonstration will include a march to the federal building and post office in Carbondale and rallies on the shore of Crab Orchard Lake, at the prison and in downtown Marion. For more information, call the sponsors: Committee to End the Marion Lockdown, (312) 663-5046, or National Committee to Free Puerto Rican Prisoners of War, (312) 278-6707.

MINNEAPOLIS

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SAN FRANCISCO

May 5

Feminism and Psychoanalytic Theory. Jessica Benjamin, noted feminist psychoanalyst and author of *The Bonds of Love*, will speak on "The Myth of the Dangerous Mother" as the final lecture in New College's Graduate Psychology Program Lecture Series. Lecture begins at 7:30 p.m. at New College Valencia Center, 777 Valencia St., San Francisco, CA 94110. For more information, call psychology program at (415) 626-1694.

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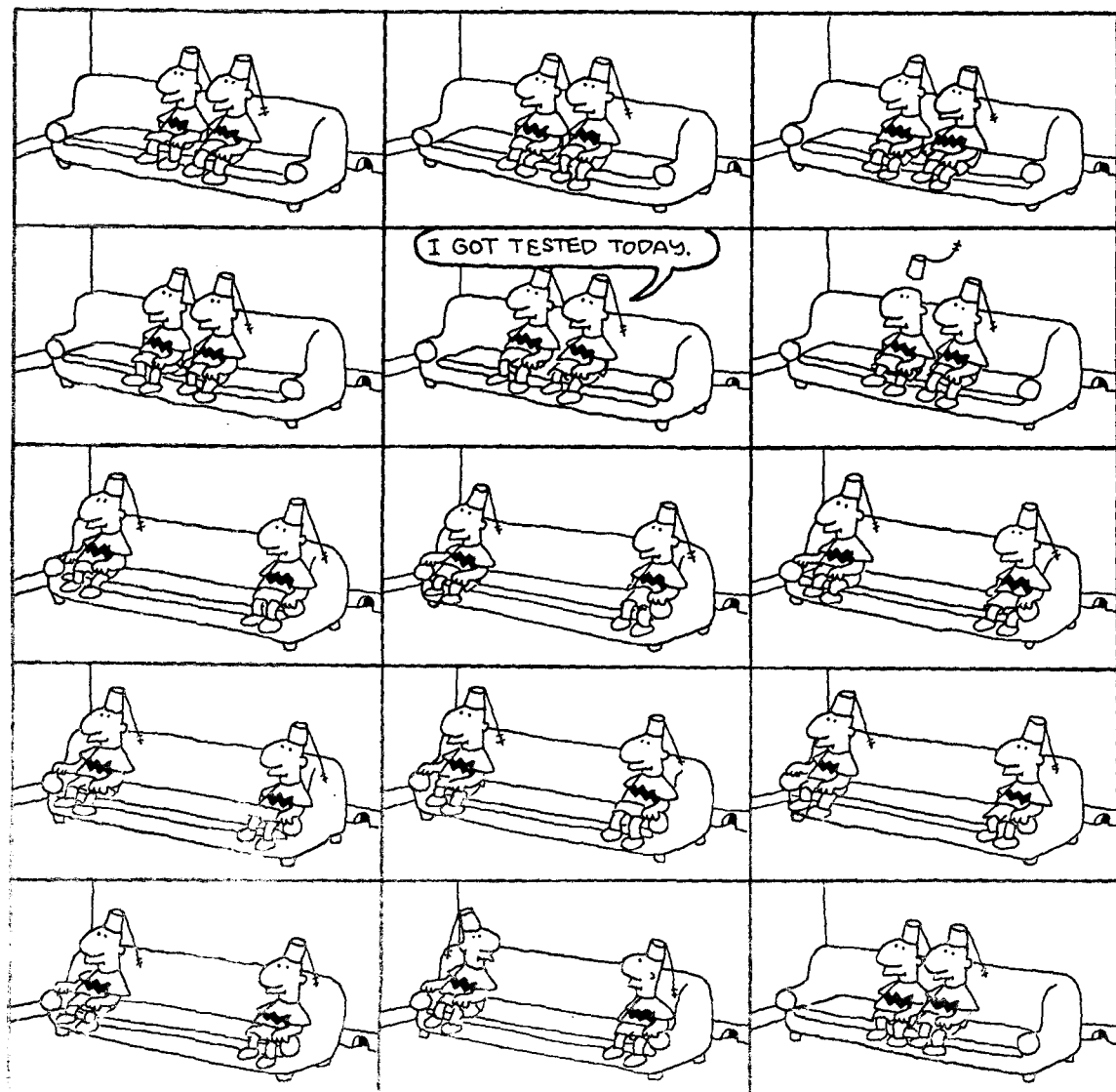
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Etiquette of the Undercaste

Antenna Theatre

Jupiter 35

Los Angeles Poverty Department

By David Graver and Loren Kruger

POLITICAL THEATER IN THE U.S. TENDS TO follow two well-worn paths to nowhere. On one lies irrelevant preaching to the converted, on the other flirtation with confirmed sinners. The San Francisco Mime Troupe, for instance, produces theater for the oppressed and cozened sectors of the population, but too often in recent years their fantasies of easy political enlightenment and obvious ruling class conspiracies have ignored political complexities.

Howard Brenton's and David Hare's *Pravda* (see *In These Times*, Feb. 1) exposes the brute and subtle powers wielded by media barons, but (due to cast size and scenery demands) can only display its progressive message in venues underwritten by major corporate foundations. In both cases, political theater resolves all too neatly into conventional, commodified forms of artistic representation.

Two new theater groups in California resist this tendency to turn political argument into an emotional commodity.

A spectacle without spectators: Antenna Theatre, based in Sausalito, Calif., offers "interactive installations." Visitors, guided by a montage of voices, ambient sound and direct instructions on a Walkman, find and sometimes lose their way like tourists in a foreign landscape. Artistic Director Chris Hardman says he got the idea from recorded tours through art museums, but he also credits an early stint in a Coney Island fun house, where his job was to haunt the "Dragon's Cave." Antenna's use of Walkman-type recorders seems like a bit of each.

Alternately haunting and didactic, the voices and the environment manipulate the visitor, but the consumerist tic that compels passive contemplation is decisively undermined. If the visitor does nothing in this experiment, there will be next to nothing to see.

Antenna's first interactive piece, *High School* (1981-82), was staged in a high school. Participants went from classrooms and toilets to the principal's office and on to graduation, accompanied by student voices and sounds. The visitors underwent the experiment as though haunting their own school days, moving through familiar territory on unfamiliar ground. The taped soundscape warps the physical surroundings and, as Hardman says, makes you feel as though no one can see you. Fortified by this invisibility, participants tend to respond readily to recorded instructions.

In the un-fun house: The group's latest piece, *Etiquette of the Underclass*, is set in a completely artificial environment. The maze created in San Francisco's SOMAR gallery (designed by Ron Davis) reminds us of the hostile environment that the dispossessed face. Their voices inhabit the soundscape created by Hardman and radio announcer Duc Qui Nguyen from interviews with local addicts, homeless people and welfare recipients, as well as the representatives of authority.

The visitor enters the installation alone, through a morgue drawer, to emerge into a soft white space occupied by a globe of the world and angelic whispers, only to be launched abruptly into the maze. In the next half hour, the visitor is bullied by the voices of teachers, job counselors and police, and



© Lukas Felzmann

LAPD at Intersection for the Arts, San Francisco, February 1989. Left to right: Carl Graue, Kevin Williams, Elia Arce, Daniel James and LeRoy "Sunshine" Mills in *Jupiter 35*.

THEATRE OF THE UNHEARD

cajoled by bosses, pimps and dealers of all sorts. At the same time, he or she is menaced by heads in glass booths and a gun in the back and shunted through the urban landscape from stores to streets to cells, each space smaller and more cramped than the one before, to end curled up on a bench until told to fall over into the last, drafty chamber of this not-so-fun house.

Etiquette of the Underclass is not designed to satisfy those (half)expecting to become one of the down-and-out—for half an hour. Rather than let us experience a familiar world from within the defamiliarizing invisibility of the Walkman's embrace, the voices from the Walkman urge us to acknowledge the invisibility of the lives of the poor.

The lack of explanation for the installation and its apparent referent—the plight of the homeless—paradoxically grounds the sense of dislocation.

The interactive piece that simultaneously invades our mental space and induces us to act out a response in physical space explodes the conventional voyeuristic sentimentality of theater, which displays someone else's private person for public consumption.

Down-scale upstarts: The Los Angeles Poverty Department (LAPD), a theater troupe drawn from the slum tenants of central Los Angeles, displays the private person upon the stage but gives this personality such an overwhelming individual autonomy that it can't be consumed. Rather than depict the socially marginalized as exotically pathetic in their dilapidated living conditions,

LAPD explores the subjective dynamics of their lives.

LAPD's latest show, *Jupiter 35* (performed in San Francisco in February), concerns a man robbed and thrown from a fourth-floor window by a gang of crack addicts and subjected to the dubious care of a charity hospital. The theme is excruciating, because the playwright and protagonist (LeRoy "Sunshine" Mills) was indeed thrown from a fourth-floor window by a gang of crack addicts. There is a picture in the lobby with the caption, "This is the last picture taken of Sunshine while he still looked like this." The fall crippled an arm and leg and crushed his face. Amazingly, the production avoids becoming a gruesome freak show or a lugubrious lamentation.

At the play's beginning, on a video monitor suspended near the ceiling we see Sunshine before his accident. He says, "I'm a capitalist. I came to this city to make my fortune, and I've had a hard time of it. But what I don't understand is that all the people who have befriended me are communists, and if they are not communists, then they are very, very far to the left. That's not right. That's not right."

We get a few more images of Sunshine talking about himself with his friends. One of the last things he says is, "I can take a lot, but I'm reaching my limit and before I go down I'll take what I need, no matter who from, because that's the American way." Then the screen goes black and crashes to the floor (an old non-functioning set serves as stuntman) and in the dark a gang of crack

addicts close in on their victim.

The lights come up in a hospital room with two doctors discussing the difficulty of getting good cheap domestic help. One counsels the other to go to a particular location where he is sure to find undocumented aliens willing to work for less than half the minimum wage. They complain about what appears to be a dead body that has been left in the emergency ward but then notice that the body (our hero) still has a pulse and so rush it to intensive care.

Object lessons: The struggle between personal integrity and dispossessing objectification highlighted by LAPD is driven to an astonishing extreme for *Jupiter 35*'s protagonist, because the struggle permeates his physical self. "Jupiter 35" was the name assigned Mills' body when it reached the hospital. The play revolves around Mills' attempts to come to terms with the new identity his body has received along with this name. The play charts his attempt to reconstruct his self within his body's altered form.

LAPD avoids sentimentalizing victimization by emphasizing the victim's struggle to control his social and physical identity. Because the spectacle of that effort is subjugated to its performance, the audience is denied an object from which to draw an emotional release.

Antenna Theatre and Los Angeles Poverty Department subvert both the comfortable emotional submersion of conventional theater and the comfortable intellectual consolation of political theater. Antenna propels the audience to the center of the performance, where any smugly "correct" political stance unravels; LAPD excludes the audience from the most vital aspects of the performance and thus refuses to acknowledge the relevance of any political stance the audience may hold dear. The formal innovations of the two groups make their work appealing to a broader audience than most political theater, while allowing them to place more challenging political demands upon the audience than even the most strident theatrical representations of politics. ■

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